EXCLUSIVE: READERS' Q&A

DARREN TURNER

The Le Mans 24 Hour hat-trick hero answers MN readers' posers P20

THE VOICE OF BRITISH MOTORSPORT

MOTORSPORT NEWS

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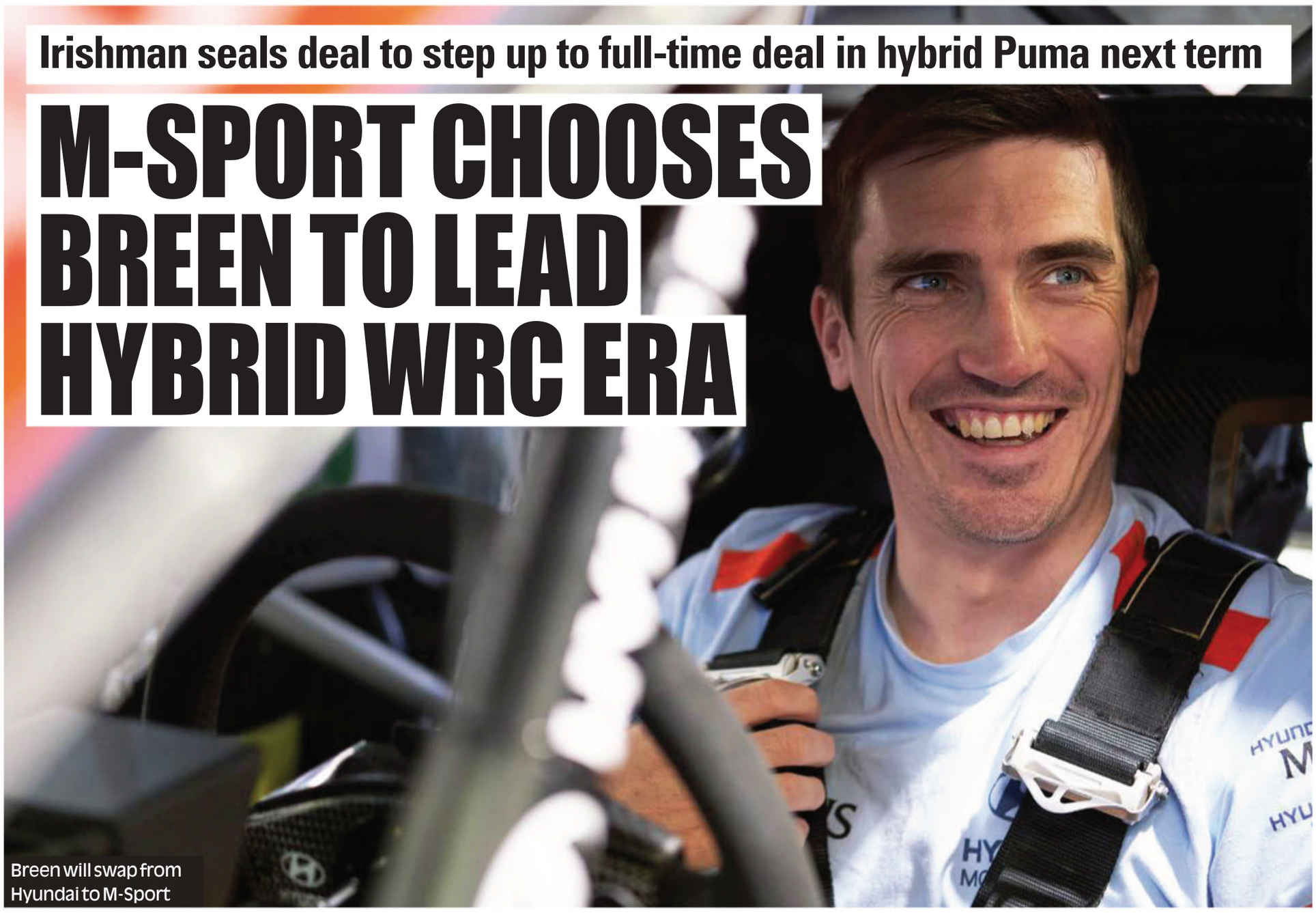
Irishman seals deal to step up to full-time deal in hybrid Puma next term

M-SPORT CHOOSES BREEN TO LEAD HYBRID WRC ERA



Breen will swap from Hyundai to M-Sport

Breen will handle the new Puma

By Graham Lister

The World Rally Championship's new hybrid era will kick off next year with a wealth of homegrown talents at the helm for two of the elite teams.

M-Sport has signed Ireland's Craig Breen to lead its Ford squad on a two-year deal, while Welsh title contender Elfyn Evans has been confirmed to remain with the works Toyota squad in 2022.

Toyota has also named Kalle Rovanpera and Takamoto Katsuta for next season, with seven-time World champion Sebastien Ogier stepping back to share the season with Esapekka Lappi.

Irishman Breen is Cumbria-based M-Sport's lone confirmed signing, although Gus Greensmith is expected to complete the British Isles' representation in rallying's top tier, with the Manchester driver strongly linked to a second M-Sport Ford Puma Rally1.

Ogier, meanwhile, will undertake his reduced schedule with a new co-driver after Julien Ingrassia announced he'll be calling time on his 16-year tenure. Countryman Benjamin Veillas will step up as replacement co-driver.

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RALLYING

MINI WRC MARVELS ON MULL

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BTCC

SHEDDEN STRIKES AT DONINGTON

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COMMENT

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Breen's achievements for Hyundai have earned him a full-time ride at the top table

BRITISH ISLES HEROES TO CHEER

There is something very appealing about the union between Craig Breen and M-Sport for the 2022 World Rally Championship. They seem almost made for each other.

I remember following Breen's totally incredible journey to the WRC Academy title in 2011, which was the longest of shots. From that point on, we've kept tabs on his progress through the dark and the glorious times.

As much as we have tracked Breen's success in all the categories he has tackled since, it has been hard to ignore the top-flight presence of M-Sport and its collection of silverware too. While it has proven itself at the very pinnacle of rallying, there has always been a sense of injustice that Malcolm Wilson and his team from Cockermouth have been without proper factory support since Ford reversed its way out of its commitments the end of the 2012 season. It is a credit to Wilson that the team has maintained its title-winning trajectory.

Now the stars have aligned and the extremely success-hungry driver Breen has joined the team that consistently shows it will be daunted by nothing. It is a lip-smacking prospect, particularly with the advent of the new Rally1 rules.

The hybrid machines will be new for everyone in 2022 and that means there is a real chance for an innovative and engineering-led team such as M-Sport to steal a march on its direct rivals. And, with an eager and talented driver behind the wheel, the ingredients are there for a really heart-warming story to be written.

He will line up in the service park next to Elfyn Evans, who has been granted another shot by the Toyota Gazoo Racing team. For the British Isles to have two drivers in genuine top-line cars is something that will take fans back nearly two decades. Who will come out ahead? It will make for an intriguing battle, and hopefully one which can spread the word of rallying to a much wider audience in terms of national interest.

Elsewhere, we have all the action from the return of the Mull Rally, which proved a big test for the British Rally Championship runners on their maiden visit to that part of Scotland. We also have all the action from the penultimate meeting of the British Touring Car Championship from Donington Park. Nothing is ever certain in the BTCC, but Ash Sutton is now fully on course for back-to-back titles.

Also in this issue, and of much national interest, is the launch of the first Motorsport News Awards in association with Cataclean. We have picked out a shortlist of race and rally drivers of the season, and we are asking you to vote. Alongside this, we will feature eight other accolades selected by MN's experts to highlight the best events, organisers and performances of 2021. Turn to page 27 to find out how to get involved.

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MOTORSPORT NEWS

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Le Mans' treble top star tells all about his many adventures

A modern-day rallying icon: Skoda's Fabia

How the Czech firm's rally workhorse has delivered a decade of dominance

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Pryce tops the BRC on first visit to Mull Rally

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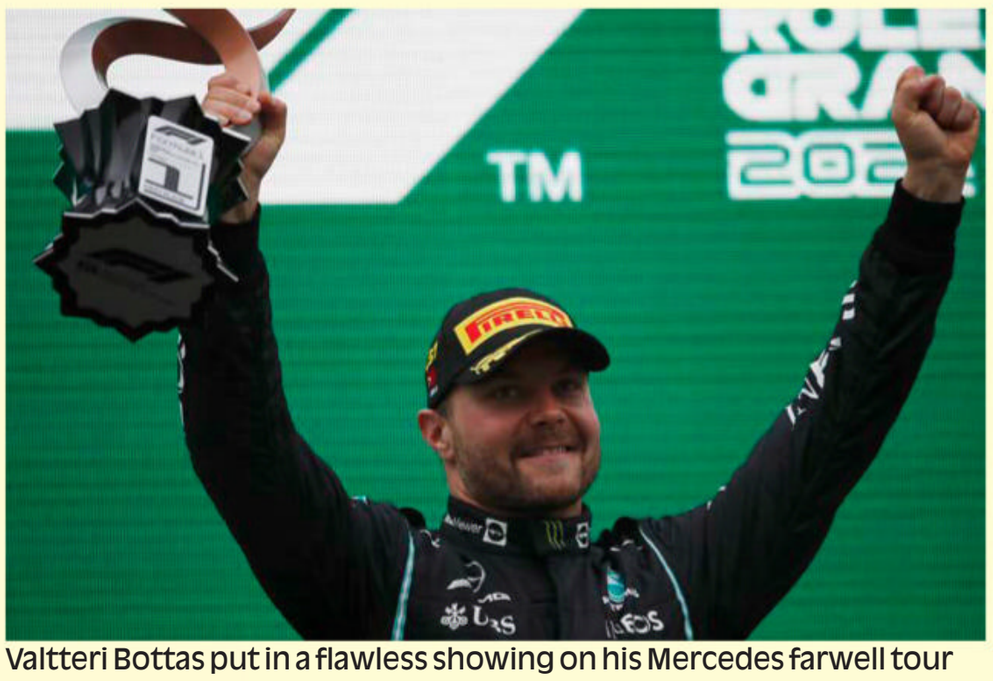
FORMULA 1 REPORT: TURKEY

Photos: Motorsport Images

Hamilton rued his late tyre change in Turkey



Valtteri Bottas put in a flawless showing on his Mercedes farwell tour

TURKEY RACE PROVES THE PITS FOR HAMILTON

Bottas dominates as Max reclaims title lead amid Hamilton frustration. By James Roberts

All eyes were on the worn inters

Second was enough for Verstappen to return to table top

In the Istanbul Park paddock, near the back of the Mercedes garage, all eyes were on the worn Pirellis that had come off Lewis Hamilton's car towards the end of the Turkish Grand Prix. The question was whether they could have lasted another eight laps, in addition to the 50 he'd already driven on them?

At the time, Hamilton felt he should have stayed on them, but both Mercedes and Pirelli didn't think they would have held out. The gamble could have had a pivotal impact on the World championship outcome. By not pitting, Hamilton might have secured third place and an extra five points, but as the rubber looked to have worn down to the canvas, a failure could have been catastrophic and would have handed Max Verstappen a huge advantage in the title chase.

In the end, Hamilton stopped for fresh intermediate tyres (as the Istanbul track never fully dried after a day of drizzly rain) and it meant he lost two positions and finished fifth – an outcome he wasn't particularly pleased with.

"What position are we in, man?" said a frustrated Hamilton on team radio. "I shouldn't have come in. I told you!" Up front Verstappen secured second place and retook the World championship lead by six points, with six races to go…

Sunday's results were a damage limitation exercise for Hamilton after his team decided to change the internal combustion engine in the back of his Mercedes and incur a 10-place grid penalty. After setting the fastest time in Saturday qualifying, it meant the British driver started 11th and had to carve his way through the field on race day.

Following his team-mate's penalty, Valtteri Bottas inherited pole and led away from the start to deliver a commanding performance in which he comfortably had the measure of Verstappen. With the combination of a slippery track and a constant management of tyre temperatures and wear, Bottas was error-free in a race he described as one of the best of his career. It was a complete turnaround to last year's Turkish GP in which he spun six times and was lapped.

In contrast to last season, the Istanbul Park track had more grip, but the cold conditions and high humidity meant that light rain kept the surface damp for the duration of the grand prix. That meant for much of Sunday's race, drivers were in a holding position. As they circulated the treads of their intermediate tyres wore down to slicks, but it was too wet to attempt fitting a dry tyre. On lap 37, Sebastian Vettel was the only competitor to take the gamble and fitted dries… only to slither off three times on his out lap.

"On the inters there was nothing left, so I thought the dry tyres could be as good but I couldn't break them in and just had no grip and lost so much time," said Vettel. "It was worse than I expected, even if it was damp a little bit here and there. It's a no-brainer now but at that time I didn't know.

"If you look at the inter tyres, there is nothing left on them. They look like a slick, so I think I had reason, but obviously it was the wrong decision."

On the opening lap Hamilton made up two places, overtaking both Esteban Ocon and Vettel, then spent eight laps behind Yuki Tsunoda's AlphaTauri. Once past the Japanese driver, he overtook Lance Stroll on the next lap and was ahead of Lando Norris and Pierre Gasly for fifth by lap 15.

His biggest fight was with Sergio Perez for fourth and on lap 35 the pair went wheel-to-wheel around the final three corners of the track, until Perez reclaimed the spot back at Turn 1. Soon after this duel, the leaders pitted for fresh intermediates, but Ferrari's Charles Leclerc (who had been running third) found himself in the lead of the race.

Like Hamilton, he too queried whether he could avoid pitting and stay on the same set of tyres to hold on for a win but, after losing too much time on his worn rubber, he pitted. In fact the only driver to have run all 58 laps without stopping was 10th-placed Esteban Ocon – and his tyres were extremely worn at the finish.

Leclerc managed to keep Hamilton at bay to finish fourth, while Perez took third to secure his first podium finish for nine races.

F1 RESULTS

Turkish Grand Prix
Laps: 58 Istanbul Park

	DRIVER	TEAM/CAR	TIME
1	Valtteri Bottas	Mercedes	1h31m04.103s
2	Max Verstappen	Red Bull-Honda	+14.584s
3	Sergio Perez	Red Bull-Honda	+33.471s
4	Charles Leclerc	Ferrari	+37.814s
5	Lewis Hamilton	Mercedes	+41.812s
6	Pierre Gasly	AlphaTauri-Honda	+44.292s
7	Lando Norris	McLaren-Mercedes	+47.213s
8	Carlos Sainz	Ferrari	+51.526s
9	Lance Stroll	Aston Martin-Mercedes	+82.018s
10	Esteban Ocon	Alpine-Renault	-1 lap

11 Antonio Giovinazzi (Alfa Romeo-Ferrari) -1 lap; 12 Kimi Raikkonen (Alfa Romeo-Ferrari) -1 lap; 13 Daniel Ricciardo (McLaren-Mercedes) -1 lap; 14 Yuki Tsunoda (AlphaTauri-Honda) -1 lap; 15 George Russell (Williams-Mercedes) -1 lap; 16 Fernando Alonso (Alpine-Renault) -1 lap; 17 Nicholas Latifi (Williams-Mercedes) -1 lap; 18 Sebastian Vettel (Aston Martin-Mercedes) -1 lap; 19 Mick Schumacher (Haas-Ferrari) -2 laps; 20 Nikita Mazepin (Haas-Ferrari) -2 laps. **Drivers' Championship:** 1 Verstappen 262.5 points; 2 Hamilton 256.5; 3 Bottas 177; 4 Norris 145; 5 Perez 135; 6 Sainz 116.5. **Constructors' Championship:** 1 Mercedes 433.5 points; 2 Red Bull 397.5; 3 McLaren 240; 4 Ferrari 232.5; 5 Alpine 104.

Alonso's race day of frustration began at the first turn

Alonso experiences the highs and the lows in Turkey

Fernando Alonso was delighted with his highest starting position for seven years – but lost out after he was pitched into a spin at the first corner of the Turkish Grand Prix.

The two-time World champion started fifth on Sunday, his best grid slot since 2014, but the Alpine driver was hit by the AlphaTauri of Pierre Gasly under at Turn 1, which netted Gasly a five-second time penalty.

A frustrated Alonso resumed the race towards the tail of the field, then picked up his own five-second time penalty for hitting Mick Schumacher in a bid to recover lost positions. After such a strong Saturday, 16th place was a disappointing outcome for the Spaniard.

Ironically, after his first corner incident, Alonso had courted controversy in Turkey when he made remarks suggesting drivers are treated differently in the stewards room when it comes to on-track behaviour.

Andretti set for majority stake in Alfa Romeo F1 team

The Andretti name could once again feature in Formula 1 as discussions between team owner Michael Andretti and Alfa Romeo are at an advanced stage.

According to sources, Andretti is looking at taking a majority stake of the Swiss team, which would expand his current roster from IndyCar, Formula E, Australian Supercars and Extreme E.

The United States is a key market for F1, with a new race in Miami joining the calendar next year and a growing audience thanks to Netflix's Drive to Survive series.

"I've been working on it [taking over a team] for a long, long, time," said Michael Andretti to Reuters. "When the right opportunity comes up I'm going to jump at it."

It wouldn't be the first partnership between the Andretti name and Alfa Romeo, as Michael's father Mario raced for the Italian marque in F1 in 1981. Michael's spell in F1 was a sole McLaren season.

RACING NEWS

WOLFF DEFENDS MERCEDES TURKISH GP TYRE CALL

Merc boss says more standard pitstop timing for Hamilton only looked better in hindsight

Merc lost out to Perez and Leclerc

Photo: Motorsport Images

Wolff admitted call faltered

By Graham Keilloh

Mercedes boss Toto Wolff has defended the team's unsuccessful gamble of trying to get Lewis Hamilton to complete last weekend's Turkish Grand Prix without a tyre stop in damp conditions.

Hamilton, on his team radio, criticised the decision to swap his intermediate tyres for a new set on lap 50 of 58, which dropped him from third to fifth and then he was unable to regain places after experiencing graining on his fresh rubber (*see race report, p4*).

Only Alpine's Esteban Ocon completed the race without a change, and finished 10th, though lost over 30 seconds to the more freshly booted Ferrari of Carlos Sainz in the period after Hamilton pitted.

Wolff said: "The intermediate obviously looked really scary but we thought that we could maybe hang out there and finish third with not stopping. And, if a dry line appeared, maybe even going onto a soft tyre until the end. So we balanced between pitting, taking it very conservative in fighting with [Charles] Leclerc and [Sergio] Perez on the track for P3, or taking a little bit of a gamble but either winning or finishing third.

"But when we saw Leclerc dropping off and then Lewis started dropping off, it was clear we wouldn't make it to the end.

"The correct call would have probably been taking it very conservative and pitting when everybody pitted for the intermediate, coming out behind Perez, probably behind Leclerc, and then fighting with them on track for P3. But this is only with hindsight after the race."

MCLAREN STAR NORRIS REVEALS MENTAL HEALTH STRUGGLES

Formula 1 star Lando Norris has revealed the scale of the mental health difficulties he experienced during his freshman grand prix campaign in 2019.

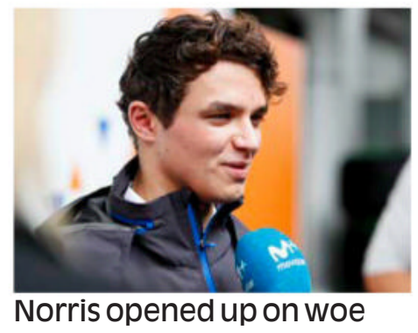
McLaren's Norris, who entered F1 with the Woking team at the age of 19, speaking last week on ITV show This Morning explained that during that season he often felt depressed and struggled to cope with the pressure on him.

He said: "I guess people, from when they just watch TV, don't realise many things that a driver goes through. Especially at my age, there's a lot of eyes on you. So dealing with all these kinds of things took its toll on me.

"Feeling like I don't know what's next? If this goes wrong, if I don't go out in the next session and perform, what's going to happen?

"So, just all of that, and then just feeling depressed a lot of the time that if I have a bad weekend, I just think I'm not good enough and things like that."

Norris added that help from McLaren and its partner mental health charity Mind has benefited him. "I'm in a much better place now. I'm much happier and I can enjoy everything I do," he noted.



Norris opened up on woe

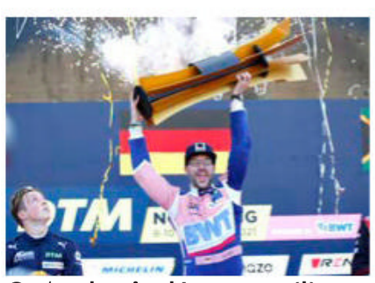
GOTZ DENIES LAWSON DTM TITLE AFTER TEAM ORDER CONTROVERSY

Maximilian Gotz claimed the 2021 DTM championship with a double win in the Norisring finale but was crowned amid controversy after Mercedes used team orders to secure his title.

Red Bull junior Liam Lawson, driving a Ferrari, was title favourite heading into the double-header, and still looked strong after Gotz won the opening Norisring race with Lawson third.

But at the start of the decider poleman Lawson was hit by the Audi of Kelvin van der Linde – also in with a title chance – who was trying an optimistic move for first on the inside of the opening hairpin. Lawson's damaged Ferrari resumed at the back and subsequently ran well off the pace, but still appeared headed for the title as the results stood.

But in the late stages Mercedes asked long-time race leader Lucas Auer and second-placed Philip Ellis – both in Mercedes – to let the third-placed Gotz's Mercedes past for the win, which let Gotz sensationally grab the title.



Gotz denied Lawson (l)

Red Bull had special colours in Turkey

RED BULL LIVERY SAYS SAYONARA TO HONDA

Red Bull ran a special white 'throwback' livery in tribute to its outgoing engine partner Honda in last weekend's Turkish Grand Prix.

Turkey's Formula 1 meeting took place on the weekend that Honda's home Japanese Grand Prix was originally scheduled for. The livery encompassed the colours of the Japanese flag and was reminiscent of the paint jobs of Honda's works F1 team from the 1960s. Red Bull drivers Max Verstappen and Sergio Perez also wore special white overalls.

The livery also included Japanese script reading 'arigato', meaning 'thank you', a message that was also carried by the cars of sister team AlphaTauri that has used Honda engines since 2018.

Red Bull and Honda have also confirmed that after the Japanese manufacturer's withdrawal at the end of this season it will, as expected, continue to support the two Red Bull teams in 2022, while in 2023 there will be a transition to full control by the new Red Bull Powertrains division.

Some Honda employees will transfer to the new Red Bull division to aid continuity. The two companies will also work together on projects outside F1.

IMOLA SET FOR F1 STAY BUT NEEDS 2022 DROP OUT

Imola's regional government says it has the funding to host Formula 1 races until 2025 though it is understood it will only feature next year if a round drops out.

The Italian circuit – which hosted F1 races from 1980 until 2006 – returned to F1's schedule in 2020 on the heavily Covid-disrupted calendar and, again amid calendar flux, stayed on the itinerary for this year's round two.

A coalition funding package for the race, worth a reported €20m, has now been approved. It combines support from the national government, the region, the CON. MI regional consortium and Italy's motorsport authority the ACI.

The Chinese Grand Prix, expected to have an April 24 slot on the provisional 2022 F1 calendar to be presented to the FIA World Motor Sport Council, is thought to represent Imola's best chance of getting on next year's schedule.

Recent F1 returnee Imola is now looking for a longer stint

Advertising enquiries: 01732 446757

RACING NEWS

ROWBOTTOM THINKS BTCC JACK SEARS TROPHY IS A STEPPING STONE

Dan Rowbottom became the first British Touring Car title winner of the season at Donington Park when he secured the Jack Sears Trophy.

The Team Dynamics Honda Civic Type R racer has already taken 20 wins in the class, which is designed to reward drivers who had not stood on the rostrum before the start of the 2021 season, and has locked up the trophy with three rounds remaining.

The Kidderminster racer has also taken his maiden outright win this season, when he prevailed at Oulton Park, and has recorded two overall pole positions in his Cataclean-backed machine.

"It is always great to win a trophy – I am certainly going to take it, and it is a mark of our journey in the British Touring Car Championship," said the 32-year-old. "But my target is much bigger than winning a class. I want to be in the mix for the main spoils – pole positions, race wins and a championship challenge – and that is the only thing that will matter to me now I have the Jack Sears Trophy under my belt."

Rowbottom is 10th in the overall standings and sits sixth in the hunt for the Independents' Trophy.

HEDLEY TO MAKE GB3 DEBUT AT DONINGTON

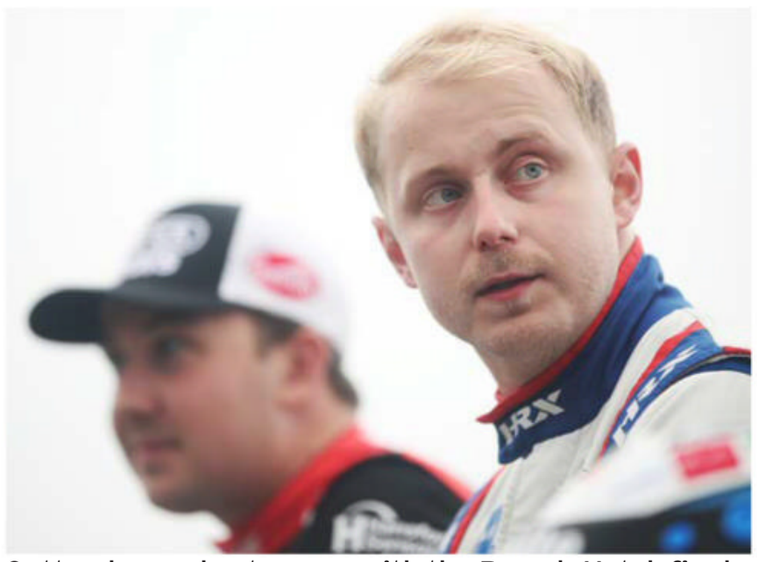
British Formula 4 frontrunner James Hedley will make his debut in the GB3 championship this weekend in its Donington Park season closer driving for Elite Motorsport.

Pre-season British F4 title favourite Hedley led the points table for much of this season, though has struggled more for results in recent rounds in a spell that also included a mid-year team switch from Fortec to Carlin.

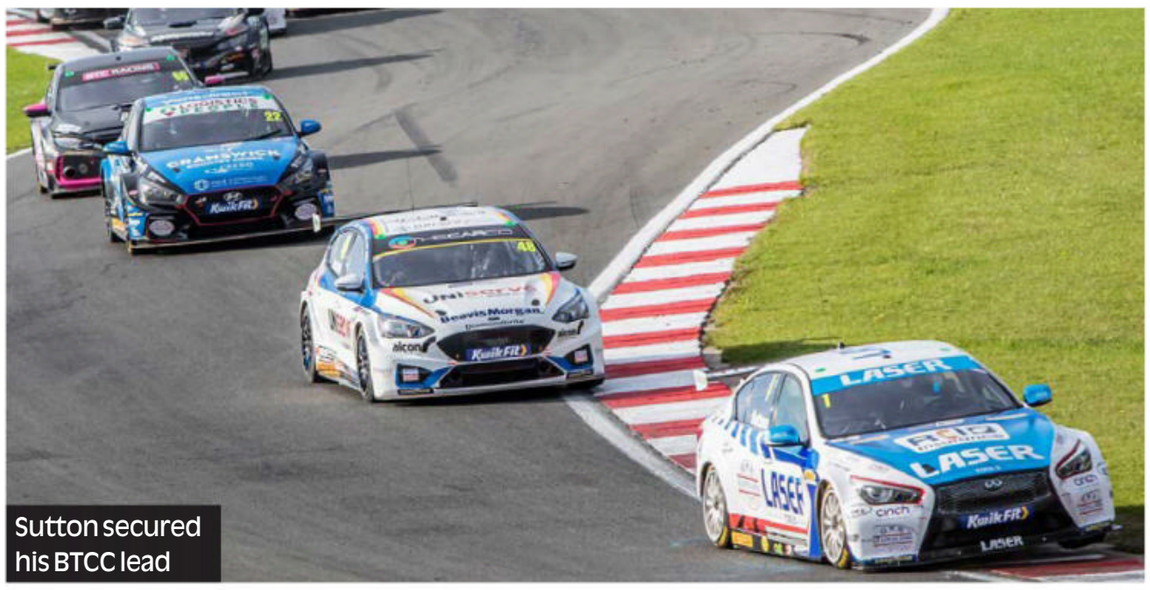
Hedley said: "My focus is absolutely on F4, as I want to give the hardworking Carlin team the wins and podiums they deserve. However, this kind opportunity from Ed Ives of Elite Motorsport is too good to refuse. It will give me a good experience to progress in any championship next year. I am really excited for this opportunity to drive the GB3 car, as the extra speed should help develop my driving."

Elite boss Ives added: "James is having a tough year in F4 so with a spare car in GB3 for the final round, James was the obvious choice. He is our 2018 Ginetta Junior Winter Series champion and 2019 overall Ginetta Junior champion so I am delighted to welcome back James to the Elite family and really looking forward to see how he adapts to GB3 after two seasons in F4."

Photos: Jakob Ebrey, Mike Hills Speed Images



Sutton has a plan to cope with the Brands Hatch finale



Sutton secured his BTCC lead

SUTTON WANTS INFORMATION OVERLOAD IN PUSH TO BTCC TITLE

The defending BTCC champion says he needs to be kept fully in the loop at Brands Hatch

By Matt James

British Touring Car Championship points leader Ash Sutton says he will demand lap-by-lap updates as he guns for his third crown at Brands Hatch next weekend.

The Laser Tools Racing Infiniti Q50 driver moved to within touching distance of back-to-back titles with a strong meeting at Donington Park where he finished seventh, fourth and eighth to push his advantage at the top of the table to 32 points with three races remaining. There are a maximum 67 points left available which means that five drivers are still in with a chance of claiming the crown.

The nearest driver to Sutton is four-time champ Colin Turkington in his WSR BMW 330i M Sport.

Sutton, who will go to the Grand Prix circuit meeting in Kent with 75kg of success ballast in his car, said: "We only lost four points in terms of the title buffer [after Donington] although we lost eight to Turkington. If we can lose just four at Brands then I will be happy.

"Thirty-two points is a very nice buffer, but it is only a race and half in terms of wins. We have just got to keep our nose clean when we get to Brands. I will be calculating where we are in the championship standings on every lap. It is a case of keeping a gauge on everyone around us.

"In previous showdowns, we have spread the pits-to-car communication out over every five or six laps to work out how I need to react to what other people are doing. I wouldn't be happy with that now: I want to know every lap. I need the full picture as I measure the standings during the race"

Turkington said he was still hopeful of putting up a challenge for the title. He won the third race at Donington Park despite spinning out of fourth spot in race two and says that the roller coaster nature of the BTCC means he still has a chance.

"The gap of 32 points [to the championship summit] is OK, that is doable," he said. "I can think back to 2014 I think I went into the finale at Brands loads of points ahead of Jason Plato [and that still turned out to be tense]. I wasn't resting easy.

"There are a lot of people chasing Ash down, me being probably the keenest among them. We have still got a chance."

BTCC CONTENDERS

After 27/30 rounds

POS	DRIVER	TEAM	POINTS
1	Ash Sutton	Laser Tools Racing infiniti Q50	316
2	Colin Turkington	WSR BMW 330i M Sport	284
3	Tom Ingram	Excelr8 Hyundai i30 N	278
4	Jake Hill	MB Motorsprt Ford Focus	271
5	Josh Cook	BTC Racing Honda Civic	250

TURKINGTON AND SHEDDEN RECORD LANDMARK VICTORIES

Honda man Gordon Shedden sets off for his 49th career BTCC win at Donington

British Touring Car Championship racers Colin Turkington and Gordon Shedden both achieved landmark victories in the meeting at Donington Park last weekend.

Team Dynamics Honda Civic Type R driver Shedden took back-to-back wins in the opening races – the second with a full 75kg of success ballast aboard. He was promoted to the latter win after the positions between the Scot and on-track rival Tom Ingram (Hyundai) were reversed following contact. The glory for three-time title winner Shedden put him on 50 career wins.

Turkington's untroubled victory in the reversed-grid encounter was his 60th in the BTCC and puts him level on the all-time winners' list with Andy Rouse who, like Turkington, has also won four titles.

Shedden said he was thrilled with the landmark. "It was nice to have such a strong weekend, it certainly put a smile on the faces of the team. But it is just a number for me: I am not stopping, and I am looking for win 60 and win 70. It is something pleasant to reflect on when I stop racing."

ALL-TIME RACE WINNERS

BTCC

	DRIVER	WINS
1	Jason Plato	97
2	Matt Neal	63
3	**Colin Turkington**	**60**
=	Andy Rouse	60
5	**Gordon Shedden**	**50**
6	Alain Menu	36
=	Yvan Muller	36
=	James Thompson	36

THOMPSON READY FOR MORE AFTER DRAMATIC MINI CHALLENGE DEBUT

British Touring Car Championship battler Bobby Thompson says he will be even more racy when he takes part in his second consecutive meeting in the Mini Challenge at Brands Hatch on October 24 after a fraught baptism at Donington Park last weekend.

The Essex racer joined the Jamsport team for his maiden attempt on the series last weekend and was due to start the opening race from the last spot on the grid following a puncture in qualifying. However, a broken driveshaft on the way to the grid meant he wasn't able to take part.

He climbed from the last row to ninth in the second race of the weekend and then made further progress to fifth in race three.

Thompson said: "The cars are tricky – particularly in the first laps when the rear tyres are still cold. There are some drivers out there who are complete nutters!"

Thompson expects to make further progress up the order during the curtain-closer at Brands Hatch, where he will have three more races. "Even at Donington, I was still doing things like getting my seating position right in the car. That will be behind me at Brands."

Big challenge: Thompson

TOLMAN SEEKS BRITISH GT BENTLEY 2022 EFFORT

Championship runner-up brings a GT3 to season-closer this weekend and wants a full-time client in 2022

Photos: Jakob Ebrey, Gavin Baker Photography/Road to Indy

Tolman has a deal with M-Sport to look for clients to race Bentley Continental GT3 and hopes Donington will be showcase

Stinton returns to British GT alongside Witt

By Graham Keilloh

Twice British GT championship runner-up Tolman Motorsport hopes its return to the category with a Bentley Continental GT3 this weekend at Donington Park precedes a full-season 2022 entry.

Tolman narrowly missed out on 2018 and '19's GT4 teams' titles before Covid curtailed its involvement with McLaren's driver development programme. This weekend it returns with a last-minute effort for Silver-Am pair Ian Stinton and Jordan Witt.

Witt took an overall British GT race win at Snetterton last year in a 2 Seas McLaren while Stinton made his British GT debut in 2000 and was part of Tolman's 2016 Ginetta G55 GT3 foray.

Boss Christopher Tolman told Motorsport News: "If we can have a good show this weekend who knows what will happen next year? The idea is that we're using it as a taster for what is to come. I've got a few irons in the fire but [I'm] always open to offers. Hopefully 2022 we can back in the paddock where we belong, and with a GT3 car.

"I've been to a couple of rounds of British GT this year and we ended up having a chat with one of the Bentley guys, that proliferated into a invitation to have a chat at M-Sport, that turned into a deal to look for some clients. I was approached by Ian Stinton a few months ago, and then we had a phone call out of the blue a week ago from Jordan and then we set wheels in motion. It's a new car to us."

BRITISH F4 AIDS DRIVER PROGRESS WITH PIRELLI TYRE SWITCH FOR '22

British Formula 4 will, from 2022, switch to Pirelli tyres from current supplier Hankook in the championship's latest technical change under its new Motorsport UK organiser.

As with the junior single-seater championship's switch to a Tatuus-Abarth chassis-engine package for 2022, the move to Pirelli brings the British championship in line with its German and Italian equivalents.

Motorsport UK added that the switch aids its objective of aiding driver progression through single-seater categories towards Formula 1. Pirelli also provides rubber in Formula 3, Formula 2 and F1 on the FIA's single-seater pathway.

Motorsport UK CEO Hugh Chambers said: "With Pirelli tyres currently being utilised on each step of the FIA's single-seater ladder to Formula 1, their use will provide drivers with an instructive, race-proven package as they embark on their first steps in the sport, building up crucial experience for the higher categories."

British F4 moves further into line with continental contests

Probable champion O'Sullivan set for FIA F3 test chance

GB3 CHAMP GETS FIA F3 VALENCIA TEST

GB3 champion elect Zak O'Sullivan is set to receive a two-day prize FIA Formula 3 test during the Formula 1 support's official end-of-season event at Valencia on November 1-3.

O'Sullivan has effectively sealed this year's title, with only an incongruously large grid for this weekend's Donington Park season closer – given points are awarded for gaining places in GB3's reversed-grid race – opening a mathematical possibility of him being caught.

The test will be funded by GB3 organiser MotorSport Vision and it continues the contest's strong FIA F3 link. Clement Novalak and Kaylen Frederick, the two most recent champions of GB3's predecessor BRDC British F3, both graduated directly to FIA F3 and Novalak finished third in 2021's standings.

Johnathan Hoggard, who finished runner-up in 2019's BRDC British F3 contest, as well as Ayrton Simmons, who currently lies second in GB3's table, have also recently made FIA F3 debuts.

AHMED SEEKS FULL US SEASON AFTER STARRING IN FINALE

British up-and-comer Enaam Ahmed is hoping for a full race season in America next year after ending a hiatus and narrowly missing Indy Pro 2000 Mid-Ohio victory 10 days ago.

The 2017 BRDC British Formula 3 champion competed in the first seven Indy Pro 2000 races this year with RP Motorsports, and got a last-minute call up by Juncos Hollinger Racing for the Mid-Ohio season-closer.

Ahmed, 21, placed eighth in Mid-Ohio's race one, then finished a close second in a wet race two behind Irish racer James Roe Jr who took a maiden win in the Road to Indy ladder championship. Ahmed led but was passed by Roe at half distance. Roe pulled out a 3s gap then Ahmed closed rapidly in the drying late stages and finished just 0.1s behind.

Ahmed said: "I raced my heart out – led for a while, made some mistakes. I was really careful with my tyres in the beginning and it paid off in the end. I started catching James but it was one lap too late. I'm happy with the outcome though. I've only done three events this season but hopefully I can do the full season next year. I really like racing in America."

KART STAR JACKES GETS GB3 DEBUT WITH HILLSPEED

Karting champion Flynn Jackes will make his car racing debut in the GB3 championship's Donington Park finale this weekend with the Hillspeed team.

The 18-year-old Australian, who was born in the Philippines and moved to the Gold Coast in Queensland in his early teens, is a two-time Asian Karting champion plus has experience in Australian and Singapore karting as well as of testing Formula 4 machinery.

Team principal Richard Ollerenshaw said: "We are very much looking forward to working with him on what will undoubtedly be a major weekend of learning. He clearly has a great deal of ability, so our job is to help harness and develop that potential."

Jackes at Donington will race alongside Formula Ford Festival winner Jonathan Browne as Hillspeed team-mate. Browne's mid-season graduation to GB3 ended the team's absence from the category.

Jackes gets car racing debut

Ahmed got second after late call

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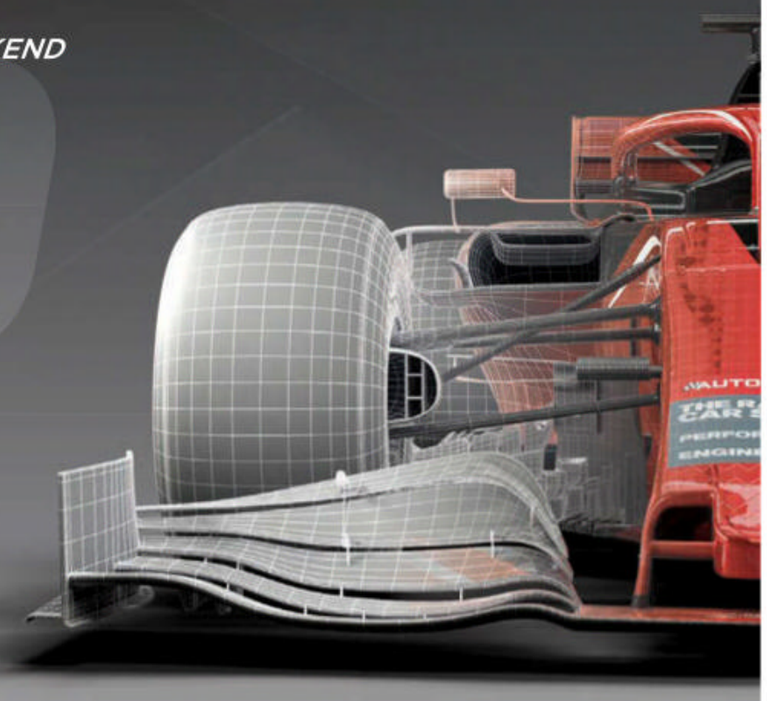

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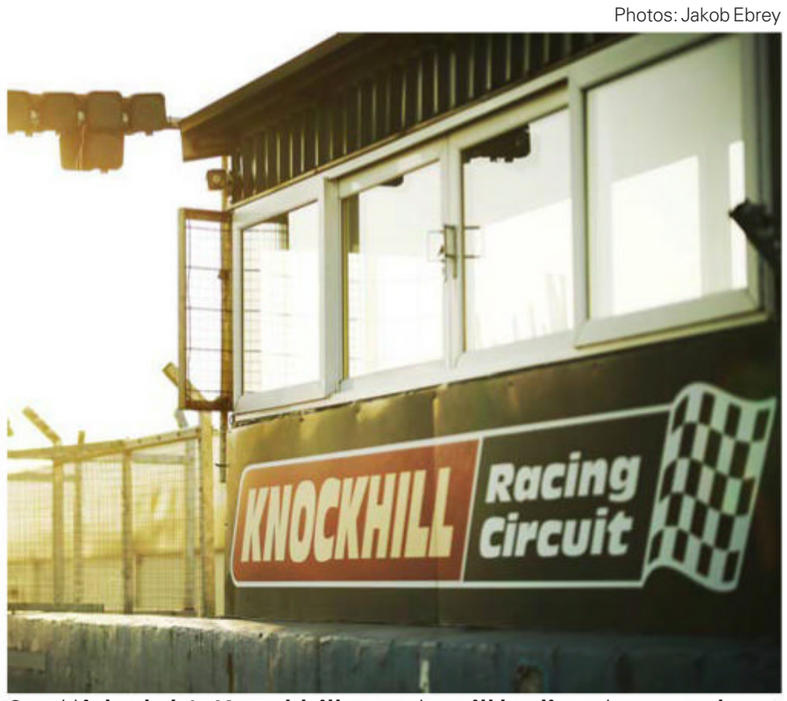
RACING NEWS

BMW SELECTED FOR NEW SCOTTISH JUNIOR CONTEST

Rear-wheel-drive BMW 116i chosen for Scotland's first junior championship as SMRC outlines its plans for 2022 including livestreaming and another Cadwell visit

Photos: Jakob Ebrey

SMRC junior contest BMW is getting rollcage fitted



Scottish club's Knockhill events will be livestreamed

By Graham Keilloh

The Scottish Motor Racing Club has confirmed it will use the BMW 116i 2004-2006 car for Scotland's first junior championship, for 14-17 year olds, making its debut next year.

The club confirmed in March that it had initial approval from Motorsport UK to run a junior championship, one of only four permitted in the UK, and since over 40 people have noted interest.

SMRC said: "We believe the lure of the BMW brand and the affordable nature of the base cars, combined with the opportunity for junior drivers to learn their craft in a rear-wheel-drive car, makes for a really exciting and unique package."

The club's next step is building an initial car for Motorsport UK inspection, and the first car is currently getting its rollcage engineered and fitted to appropriate standards. SMRC will release more information on the exact build spec over the next couple of weeks and aims that interested parties can place build kit orders from next month.

SMRC added that work is ongoing to introduce another new category to its line up. It also will revert next season to running full-day race meetings, replacing the half-day format with morning testing used in the last two years.

The club intends in the coming weeks to release a six-event 2022 calendar, starting in April and running to October. It will again include a Cadwell Park away day, with a provisional date of Sunday July 17. The club has also committed to livestreaming its Knockhill events next season.

TEAM USA SCHOLARSHIP DRIVERS FOR '21 NAMED

Max Esterson and Andre Castro have been chosen to race for the Team USA Scholarship in this year's Formula Ford Festival and Walter Hayes Trophy blue riband end-of-year events.

The scholarship was founded in 1990 by writer and broadcaster Jeremy Shaw and its alumni include two-time IndyCar champion Josef Newgarden, plus Jimmy Vasser, Oliver Askew and Conor Daly.

Castro and Esterson were selected from six finalists in a two-day shootout on the Polecat Training Center road course in Lynchburg, Tennessee, and will campaign a pair of patriotically liveried Ray GR18 cars prepared by Low Dempsey Racing in the Brands Hatch event on October 30-31 and the Silverstone event the following weekend.

Esterson, 18, has been competing for Low Dempsey in this year's National FF1600 championship and sat third in the table before last weekend's Snetterton finale, while 22-year-old Castro has been competing in USF2000 and F1600 plus he also raced with Low Dempsey at Snetterton.

Esterson said: "[It] really is a dream come true. The scholarship can be a springboard for my career and open many doors. My full focus now is to bring home some hardware from England."

Esterson has been competing in National FF1600 in 2021

Nominations are open for who will succeed Bugatti Owners Club as club of year

ENTRIES OPEN NOW FOR MOTORSPORT UK AWARDS

Entries are now open for the latest Motorsport UK club and volunteer of the year awards as well as for its young journalist and young photographer of the year.

The club of the year has been celebrated for the last 28 years while the volunteer of the year award is 18 years old. The Bugatti Owners Club and BTRDA Rallycross championship coordinator Jordine Crooks were 2020's winners. The organising team of the year award, introduced last year, also returns. Nominations close on October 31.

The club and organising team winners receive a Motorsport UK trophy and a cheque for £1000 while runners-up get £500 as well as a trophy. The volunteer of the year winner and runner-up also receive a trophy and a cheque for £500 and £250 respectively.

The annual young media awards was launched in 2002 to encourage and inspire upcoming motorsport journalists and photographers throughout the UK. Entrants must be aged 30 or under on January 1 2021 and entries must be received on or before Monday December 6.

IN BRIEF

Henry Fairhead RIP

Motorsport News was sad to learn that long-serving Snetterton scrutineer Henry Fairhead passed away last month following a short illness. The popular and respected Fairhead started scrutineering in the mid-1990s after retiring from his long-running haulage contractor business. Fairhead also had a long motorsport history in rallies and circuit events in his home-prepared Ford Escorts.

Walker remembered

The Scottish Motor Racing Club at its Knockhill meeting last Sunday held a Classics Sports and Saloon race in memory of popular long-time racer Andy Walker, who passed away earlier this year. An Andy Walker Memorial Trophy was also awarded to a driver showing great spirit and resilience on the day. Walker's friend Iain Sinclair also drove Walker's Triumph Special on some demonstration laps.

Covid commendation

Motorsport UK has reached the finals of next month's Sports Industry Awards 2021 after being shortlisted in the 'Best Covid-19 Response by a Sport' category. Its Covid response included a £1 million club continuity fund and preparing restart guidance. Other shortlisted national governing bodies include the English Football League, Lawn Tennis Association and Premiership Rugby.

Going for Gould

Motorsport UK Academy and Loughborough College coach Adam Gould has been nominated for 'Talent Development Coach of the Year' in the 2021 UK Coaching Awards. Gould has recently been delivering Motorsport UK Academy training online due to Covid restrictions and helped Sandy Mitchell, Harry King and Luke Browning to their respective championship titles in 2020.

Fiesta Junior rejig

The British Racing and Sports Car Club's Fiesta Junior championship has issued a revised points table after it transpired that Deagen Fairclough and James Wallis were incorrectly awarded points when racing as guests in May's season-opening Croft round. Fairclough won both Croft races, and now sits fifth in the revised table, 18 points shy of fourth-placed Wallis.

Hutchison history

Dundee racer Finlay Hutchison created history last weekend when he was part of the first GT World Challenge Endurance Cup crew to race the brand-new Audi R8 LMS GT3 EVO II. The 21-year-old raced for the official Audi factory alongside ex-Formula 1 driver Markus Winkelhock and British GT leader Dennis Lind during GTWCE's Barcelona season finale.

RALLY NEWS

Lappi's happy return in '22

LAPPI TO TAKE ON MAJORITY OF 2022 ROUNDS FOR TOYOTA

Esapekka Lappi is expected to do the bulk of the driving during his car-sharing arrangement with Sebastien Ogier next season.

Lappi's return to Toyota, whom he left to join Citroen for 2019, was announced last week. Ogier confirmed a part-time season in 2022 alongside new co-driver Benjamin Veillas, with Julien Ingrassia electing to retire.

Team boss Jari-Matti Latvala has already suggested Ogier can choose own roster. The seven-time World champion is unlikely to contest more than five events, starting at the Monte Carlo Rally.

With a 13-round WRC planned for 2022, Lappi can plan at least eight events in the all-new hybrid-based Yaris.

"I have some great memories from the past and as soon as I got back into the Yaris WRC [on Rally Finland earlier this month], it felt again like this was my car," said Lappi. "For next year we will have a new car and although I have not driven it yet, it seems like it will be very different with the new regulations. But it will be interesting to be a part of it and I'm very excited."

Ogier added: "I'm looking forward to having more time with my family, but I'm very happy to remain with Toyota and having the chance to compete in some rallies next year. I'm very thankful to the team for giving me this opportunity to keep doing on a partial basis what I love to do. I will do my best to help the team in the manufacturers' championship and to develop the car. I know the team is putting a lot of effort into it."

BREEN HAILS HIS 'GOLDEN TICKET' TO LEAD M-SPORT WRC ATTACK

Irishman ties up a deal to push forwards in to new era with hybrid Puma Rally1

Photos: Hyundai Motorsport, mcklien-imagedatabase.com, Motorsport Images

Breen earns top Ford seat

M-Sport has focused on making the Puma a Rally1 star

By Graham Lister

Craig Breen's trio of World Rally Championship podiums this season helped convince M-Sport boss Malcolm Wilson that he was the right man for the job.

Irishman Breen, 31, has been chosen to lead M-Sport's attack on WRC's new hybrid era under a two-year deal alongside co-driver Paul Nagle.

Having driven the all-new Ford Puma Rally1 at M-Sport's private testing facility in Greystoke Forest recently, Breen is set for more seat time this month with a multi-surface test in Spain.

Wilson said: "I have known and followed Craig's progress for 10 years now, his father was a great customer of M-Sport and I have watched Craig develop in a number of different M-Sport cars to get him to where he is today. His performances this season have not gone unnoticed, delivering fantastic consistent results whilst only having a partial WRC programme.

"We started discussions a number of months ago and I am very excited. We have a fantastic car in the Puma and I have no doubt that Craig and the Puma will deliver success for the team in the coming seasons."

Breen first drove an M-Sport Ford rally car in 2008, his first year in rallying after graduating from karts.

"We have been given a golden ticket to drive for the most prestigious marque in motorsport and fight for the World Rally Championship," said Breen. "Ford has always been very close to my heart as my career started in the Ford Fiesta R2. I love rallying, every nuance of the sport, but especially the history. To add my name to the list of drivers that have driven for Ford is a bit surreal, drivers like Ari Vatanen, Hannu Mikkola, Colin McRae and Carlos Sainz.

"I am humbled by the faith that Malcolm, Rich [Millener] and everyone in the M-Sport team has shown in us."

Breen is the first driver Cumbria-based M-Sport has formally announced for 2022, although it's expected that Frenchman Adrien Fourmaux and Briton Gus Greensmith will both get full programmes in the Puma Rally1. The pair currently head M-Sport's World Rally Championship attack with the Fiesta WRC.

Hyundai boss sorry to see star leave

Hyundai team chief Andrea Adamo has labelled Craig Breen and Paul Nagle "among WRC's finest" in a tribute to the pair following their switch to M-Sport for 2022.

With Hyundai not offering the Irishmen a full campaign, Breen and Nagle's three-year association with the South Korean make is now over.

Adamo sad that it's over

Adamo said: "The results have shown they have the pace to be among WRC's finest. They are two fully focused individuals and form a potent, professional partnership; they have always been there for us when we needed them."

Breen said: "It is with great sadness that we can't continue with Hyundai Motorsport but what an amazing story it has been; coming from nowhere, competing back at home and flung back into the WRC. Hyundai gave us our lifeline."

Dani Sordo and Oliver Solberg will share Hyundai's third i20 entry alongside Thierry Neuville and Ott Tanak.

EVANS AIMS TO REIN IN HIS WRC TITLE LONG SHOT

Evans relishes the prospect of grippy Spanish asphalt

Elfyn Evans continues his late charge for the World Rally Championship in Spain from today (Thursday) with strong words of support from this Toyota team boss Jari-Matti Latvala.

Evans fired himself back into title contention by winning Rally Finland and adding the Powerstage victory to his haul in Jyvaskyla.

With two rounds remaining, Evans is 24 points behind team-mate Sebastien Ogier with 60 still on the table, including Powerstage bonuses, between the season-closing events in Salou and Monza. However, a six-point swing in Ogier's favour this weekend would make Ogier champion for the eighth time.

"The drivers' title is still a long shot for us but once more we'll be giving our best in Spain and trying to get the best possible result there," said Evans.

Rally Spain follows an all-asphalt route for the first time since 2010 when a gravel-based leg was added.

"Whenever I've driven the Yaris on asphalt, the surface has usually been quite dirty or provided very low grip, so I'm excited to drive the higher-grip roads in Spain," Evans added. "That said, at this time of year the weather is never guaranteed to be dry even in Spain. If it does rain, as we've seen in previous years, it can still be quite a tricky and demanding event."

ESSENTIALS

Rally Spain
October 15-17
WRC round 11/12
Base: Salou, Spain **Surface:** Asphalt
Stages: 17 **Distance:** 174.27 miles

Of his title prospects in Spain, Ogier added: "Only a Toyota driver can win the drivers' title, but our main goal as a team in Spain will be to get enough points to secure the manufacturers' championship."

Latvala looking forward

Latvala: Evans has proven he can be champion

Toyota team boss Jari-Matti Latvala believes Elfyn Evans' victory on Rally Finland earlier this month is proof he's fast enough to become World champion in 2022.

Evans and co-driver Scott Martin have been confirmed for Toyota's attack on the hybrid era of the WRC with Kalle Rovanpera and Takamoto Katsuta also onboard for full campaigns, while Esapekka Lappi returns to the team to share a car with Sebastien Ogier across the season.

After watching Evans win in Finland for the first time, ex-driver Latvala said: "Elfyn is a really consistent driver, always helping to get the points for the team towards the championship, but as he proved with his victory on Rally Finland, he's also absolutely one of the fastest and definitely one of the contenders to win the title."

MOTORSPORT NEWS

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Motorsport News has delved into its extensive archive to produce the second of our quarterly bookazines, this time reflecting on the 1981 season, some 40 years ago.

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RALLY NEWS

CAMPLING RECALLS TERRIFYING POKERSTARS SHAKEDOWN CRASH

Yorkshireman grateful for assistance rendered at the roadside after major Manx moment

Photos: SQsports Photos, Jakob Ebrey, mcklein-imagedatabase.com

Campling hails modern safety features after he and co-driver Ducker took a big hit

By Luke Barry

Motorsport UK Asphalt Championship regular David Campling is planning his comeback following a huge accident on shakedown for the recent PokerStars Rally.

Campling and co-driver James Ducker's Skoda Fabia R5 somersaulted into a field, with Ducker fracturing three vertebrae while Campling has a closed rib fracture and some "monster bruises" down his left side.

"I don't have much memory of the accident," Campling said. "I can remember approaching the crest and the next thing I remember is a spectator helping me out of the car. Jim [co-driver] remembers the accident and looking at the data from the car I braked, the wheels have locked, I have come off the brakes and back on and they have locked again, but by this time the accident was probably inevitable. Basically, it looks like I just braked too late on a surface that was a lot more slippery than it looked.

"For the size of the accident the car has come off very well with no real structural damage to the shell and mechanical damage looks like a wheel, brake disc and a suspension arm," Campling added. "I think that we're able to come out of that accident is a testament to the strength of these modern cars and the thought that has gone into the safety equipment that is in them."

The Yorkshireman expressed gratitude for the support he and Ducker have received since their accident and admitted to being troubled by the injuries sustained by his friend and co-driver. "We have had loads of messages from people in the rally family from all over Europe checking up on how we are," he said. "I would like to thank all the people who helped us at the scene of the accident, especially the spectators who were first with us."

SPECTATORS WILL BE WELCOME FOR CAMBRIAN RALLY

Cambrian Rally organisers have announced that spectators will be welcome to the penultimate round of this year's British Rally Championship season on October 30.

Joint clerk of the course Alyn Edwards explained: "Since early January this year we have been working with the Welsh Government, Conwy County Borough Council Safety Advisory Group, NRW and Motorsport UK to plan two events at the same time one with spectators and one without. Thanks to the current position with Covid-19, we are delighted to be organising an event fit to welcome spectators.

"To ensure the event went ahead and spectators can attend we have had to devise a track and trace system. However, this remains subject to the Covid situation remaining stable. We must also reiterate that everyone must adhere to any guidelines in place at the time and follow the marshals' instructions at all times."

Spectator tickets will be on a pre-sale basis, with spectators able to purchase a vehicle car parking ticket online via the event's website. At the car park entrance, in exchange for the ticket, they will be given a programme. The ticket will give access to one car park only.

YATES FEELS HE HAS "DROPPED OFF" BRITISH TITLE FIGHT

M-Sport driver Rhys Yates skipped the trip to Mull last weekend, leaving title rivals Matt Edwards and Osian Pryce as the only two BRC1 drivers to compete.

Yates has now effectively used both of his dropped scores after only scoring four points on the Trackrod, leaving him with a second, third and fourth place finish so far.

Title contender Yates told MN: "I'm not where I want to be in the championship and I do feel like I've dropped off the fight a little bit to be honest. We've not where we want to be on gravel, we're not where I feel like I should be with the way I feel like I'm driving.

"We've just had a bit of bad luck," he added.

Yates will return to his BRC campaign on the Cambrian Rally, but will meanwhile have his debut in his Ford Escort Mk2 on the Carlisle Stages in preparation for the Roger Albert Clark Rally in November.

Yates used his final dropped score to sit out Mull event

Armstrong aiming for title

NORTHERN IRISH TALENT AIMS HIGH FOR DECISIVE RALLY SPAIN

Northern Ireland's 17-year wait for a World rally champion could finally be ended in Spain this week if results go the way of Jon Armstrong at the final round of the Junior World Rally Championship.

Armstrong arrives in Spain three points behind Sam Pajari but has been peerless on asphalt so far this season, taking victory in Croatia by 33 seconds and finishing a minute clear of Pajari in Ypres.

"With it being on Tarmac that is probably better for us overall as our pace is good on that surface," Armstrong told MN, "We are just trying to continue with our normal preparations and treat Spain like any other rally, really."

Northern Ireland's last World championship silverware came in 2004 when Niall McShea claimed the Production World Rally Championship. Armstrong said: "I watched drivers like Niall and Alastair Fisher performing well at that top level. It's always been my goal to get there."

Also travelling from the province, Josh McErlean hopes to secure a seat in next season's World Rally Championship.

The event marks McErlean's third WRC3 appearance of 2021, the 22-year-old Hyundai i20 R5 driver having finished fifth in class in both Portugal and Ypres.

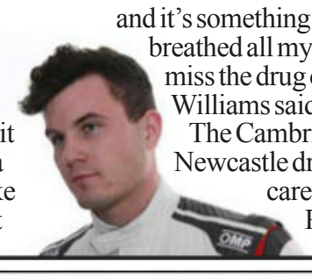
"A WRC campaign of some sort is definitely our ambition next year," McErlean confirmed.

WILLIAMS RETURNS TO BRC PLEDGING TO GET BACK ON THE PACE OF SERIES REGULARS

British Rally Championship returnee James Williams has admitted it was crucial for him to compete in 2021 as he prepares for a Cambrian Rally bid.

Williams hasn't driven since the same event in March 2020, where he steered a Proton Iriz R5 to fifth overall. He will contest this year's Cambrian in a Ford Fiesta Rally2, hired from Dom Buckley RSC.

"I never doubt myself, but it is so important for me to do a rally because one I miss it like crazy, it's my favourite sport and it's something I've lived and breathed all my life, so I just miss the drug of rallying," Williams said.



The Cambrian will be the Newcastle driver's second career outing in a Rally2 car, but he is setting a high target to aim for: "For me to try and do this rally, I'm going to be flat out. That's going to be tough with the experience the guys have had this year in that class, the rallies they've done. I know I can do it, it's just about getting back in the groove so the prep is key."

EXTREME E DRIVER EMMA GILMOUR TO MAKE RALLY RETURN

Extreme E driver Emma Gilmour will enter her first rally in the British Isles since 2006 later this month.

The Kiwi heads to the Cambrian Rally with Claire Mole in a Ford Fiesta Rally2. Gilmour will rent the car from CA1 Sport, making use of an extended stay in Europe after the XE round in Sardinia on October 23-24 – a week beforehand.

Gilmour said: "I'm a bit stuck because I can't get a quarantine spot to go home to New Zealand after the Sardinia round of Extreme E. I've been staying with Claire and after reminiscing about our past rallying experience, we decided to grab the opportunity to do it again.

"We haven't been in the car together since 2013 when we did the International Rally of Whangarei," she added. "[Rally2] is the best class of car out there that that's accessible at a world level. Obviously it's not a WRC car but it's the next best thing."

Gilmour and Mole return

RALLY NEWS

Photos: Rallycrossworld.com, KMS, Martin Walsh

Too few entries for Tipperary event

NO GRAVEL FOR IRELAND IN 2021

Tipperary Forestry Rally is scratched due to shortage of entries

By Martin Walsh

The Sean Conlon Tipperary Forestry Rally, which was scheduled for October 23, has been abandoned due to a lack of entries.

Motorsport News understands that the Tipperary club had received only 40 entries for the event, the only Motorsport Ireland gravel rally on the revised 2021 calendar, and almost two thirds of those were unpaid.

The entry fee was set at €695 (£590) for the four stages (2x2) totalling 30 miles with 103 road miles, which is not believed to have been viewed as good value for money by many of the potential entrants.

The organisers are refunding paid entries, and the subject of how Irish gravel events may be run in future is likely to be a hot topic when Motorsport Ireland hosts its first ever congress on November 6, although the governing body has yet to announce a venue that will cater for all its affiliated clubs along with the various representatives. Portlaoise and Tullamore are the preferred options, with Athlone another potential candidate.

IN BRIEF

Stone hails R5
Asphalt Rally Championship contender John Stone gave a ringing endorsement of R5 cars compared to older WRC machinery after swapping his first-generation Ford Fiesta WRC for a VW Polo GTi R5 at the recent Pokerstars Rally on the Isle of Man, He declared: "It's night-and-day better than the Fiesta, more torque in any gear, enough to pull you out of any trouble. I've not had a single moment here, on either the technical or quick stages."

Epynt approved
Organisers have confirmed that the Tour of Epynt will run on Sunday October 31 on the military ranges above Sennybridge, satisfying all necessary Covid compliances. The rally will form a round of the Welsh National Tarmacadam championship, the King of Epynt Challenge and the ANWCC stage rally championship. Entries are open to competitors in these series, to fully elected members of the organising club and of any club in the WAMC/ANWCC. Full regulations can be seen at Porttalbotmotorclub.co.uk

Targa date swap
Chelmsford MC has cancelled its Bonfire Targa, due to run at the end of the month, and replaced it with the Javalin's Jumbo Targa, which is taking place this weekend on October 17. For full details visit chemsfordmc.co.uk

KMS THREE-CAR LINE UP FOR WORLD RX 2022

Kristoffersson Motorsport has been confirmed the first team to commit to the World Rallycross Championship's new electric era.

It will run a three-car line up for the 2022 season.

World RX series bosses revealed prior to the KMS announcement that 14 of the Kreisel-developed twin-motor, four-wheel-drive electric powertrain kits had been ordered so far for the 2022 season. KMS has enjoyed a relationship with the VW group since the early 1990s, although the team is yet to confirm what cars it will run next year, or who will drive them.

Tommy Kristoffersson said: "We have already won one World title with our own team last year, but to fight for the first-ever World crown with electric rallycross cars is the ultimate challenge and one that really inspires us – it was simply an opportunity that was far too good to turn down."

Kristoffersson excited by electric rallycross prospects

OBITUARY

John Wood 1959-2021

Wood shone in British events with MR2

Long-time autocross and rallycross driver John Wood passed away last month. Wood started his over 30-year competition career in the mid-1980s in national off-road racing, driving Volkswagen-based space frame buggies.

In the following decade he moved to autocross, initially competing in Minis and claiming class honours and outright victories. At the end of the millennium, Wood moved into racing a Ford Fiesta, which he would come to share with teenage son Gareth. He later became well known in rallycross for his exploits in Toyota MR2s at both Clubman and British national level, finishing fourth in the British Rallycross Super National category in 2012.

He switched focus to supporting son Gareth in with his own autocross and rallycross exploits, and more recently granddaughter Summer in her first steps into karting. Motorsport News extends its sincere sympathies to Wood's family and many friends.

ROAD RALLY ROUND-UP

Variety is the spice of Targa rallying life

John Davies, courtesy of numerous wins this season, was seeded at Number 1 for the Targa In The Dark, but he was unable to start the event. Instead, his son Ethan fulfilled the traditional family role and took a dominant win.

Dave Whittock and his team at Bath MC laid on a brisk four-hour event, starting at dusk and taking in five tests, each tackled twice. Heavy rainfall before the start added to the event's challenge.

Ethan Davies/Dan Johnson were fastest on the first test and were never headed. They took fastest time on eight tests and ended almost two minutes ahead of the field to take their maiden win.

Dan Morris/Geth Johnson had been their closest challengers, but gained a test maximum on Test 8 after going off the road, promoting Huw Morris/Dan Pidgeon into the runner-up spot ahead of Jason Stone/Daniel Stone.

On the Solway Coast Targa Ali Procter/Chris Dodds put in a similar winning performance, leading from start to finish on the MoD Dundrennan Ranges based event.

Ian Mills

Results

Targa In The Dark
Organiser: Bath Motor Club **When:** October 2 **Where:** Wincanton **Championships:** ASWMC CMSC **Tests:** 10 **Starters:** 55.
1 Ethan Davies/Dan Johnson (Ford Puma) 50m26s; 2 Huw Morris/Dan Pidgeon (Ford Focus) +1m46s; 3 Jason Stone/Daniel Stone (BMW Compact); 4 Gary White/Bradley White (BMW 318Ti); 5 Gavin Rogers/Abi Haycock (Ford Escort); 6 Keith Lane/Martin Lane (Ford Ka); 7 Carl Hawkins/Iain Tullie (BMW 318Ti); 8 Jamie Jones/Dafydd Owens (Escort); 9 Eilir Williams/Tomos Evans (Vauxhall Corsa); 10 Andrew Dodd/Mark Freeman (Toyota MR2). **Class Winners:** Clubman: White/White; Experts: Morris/Pidgeon; **Semi-Experts:** Elliott Sharp/Liam Carfrae (MG ZR); **Novices:** Philip Luxton/Oliver Luxton (Rover 25)

Solway Coast Targa
Organiser: Solway Car Club **When:** October 03 **Where:** Kirkcudbright **Championships:** NESCRO **Tests:** 16 **Starters:** 21.
1 Ali Procter/Chris Dodds (Peugeot 205) 25m13s; 2 Simon Jennings/Colin Fish (Peugeot 106) +1m58s; 3 Chris Adams/Harry Adams (Mazda MX-5); 4 Rab Henderson/Peter Game (Subaru Impreza); 5 Geoff Bateman/Maggy Bateman (205); 6 Richard Dickson/Nancy Dickson (MX-5); 7 Scott Gourlay/Greg Alcorn (Ford Fiesta); 8 Gavin Murray/Richard Murray (MG ZR); 9 Aaran Ferguson/Grant Carson (Peugeot); 10 Allan Paterson/Alice Paterson (MX-5) **Class Winners:** Experts: Procter/Dodds; **Semi-Experts:** Bateman/Bateman; **Novices:** Adams/Adams

Photos: JJ Gallagher

JERSEY RALLY: BY IAN HARDEN

LE NOA HEADS HOME A PHALANX OF ESCORTS ON JERSEY RALLY

Ford Escort Mk2 driver Ross Le Noa returned to winning ways on his local rally, beating fellow Escort driver Jeremy Baudains by 40.8 seconds.

Le Noa and co-driver Domonic Volante overhauled early leaders Lee Vivian/Will Rutherford (Ford Fiesta Rally2) on the opening loop of stages in Trinity and St Martins before fending off allcomers on Friday evening's Rossignol and St Brelade tests. Saturday morning's eight stages ran on dry, increasingly fast roads.

Le Noa and his rivals swapped fastest times through St John and Rozel until the pressure told on Vivian who crashed on Waterworks 1, blocking the stage. With one rival gone Le Noa sealed victory on Waterworks 2, going nine seconds faster than Baudains and confirmed top spot with another fastest time through the penultimate test, Waterworks 3.

Winner Le Noa proved there's plenty of life left in the venerable Ford Escort Mk2

Results
Organisers: Jersey Motor Cycle & Light Car Club. **When:** October 8-9. **Where:** Jersey **Championships:** None. **Starters:** 60. **Stages:** 26.
1 Ross Le Noa/Domonic Volante (Ford Escort Mk2) 1h 53m 11.5s; 2 Jeremy Baudains/James Ollivro (Escort Mk2) +40.8s; 3 Same Bingle/Aaron Nicolle (Escort Mk2); 4 Dave Oliviera/Victor Nobrega (Escort Mk2); 5 John Le Brun/Leah Lloyd (BMW E30); 6 Rob de St Paer / Steve Hobbs (Escort Mk2); 7 Richard Fishleigh/ Jason McCullough (Escort Mk2); 8 Andy Corner/Ade Campo (Peugeot 205); 9 James Labey/Ashley Trimble (Escort Mk2); 10 Mark Follain/Lee Dare (Escort RS1600). **Class winners,** Paul Vibert/Richard Amey (Escort 1300 GT), John Eborall/Alex Rosamond (Peugeot 106 GTi), Bingle/Nicolle, Le Noa/Volante, Lyndon Barton/Simon Hunter (Ford Fiesta R5), Corner/Campo.

THE RACER
Pit talk from the HRDC
VOL 11 NO. 139
AUG 25

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HISTORICS

DOWN THE PUB

MOLLY DODD

Historic FF2000 star
Age: 18 **Lives:** Silverstone

Dodd has a W Series hope

She's new to single-seaters

"I did about four years of karting and then I moved into Junior Saloons in 2018. I did three seasons of that. I did a year of Ginetta Juniors as well. It was a fairly big budget and we wanted to experience single-seaters, which is why we came into Historic FF2000 this season."

She starred at Oulton

"The Oulton Park Gold Cup was a fantastic weekend. In the first race it hopped out of gear on the startline so I went from seventh to 20th and it was a qualifying race for the final. From 20th I managed to finish fifth which was a fantastic result. I didn't realise until the end of the race how well we'd done because I was focused on getting back up."

The pace was good from the start

"I expected FF2000 to be a gradual learning curve but I just picked it up from the start. I think it's probably more of a style match and now I've picked up a bit more experience and perhaps a little bit more confidence it's going incredibly well."

W Series is the ambition

"Obviously I'd love to do another year in the Royale. I love the championship and the car is fantastic but my end goal is to make it to a seat in the W Series. With the experience that I'm gaining here I feel like it's becoming more of an achievable target. If we could pull together a bigger budget then we'll look at potentially doing a higher formula like British F4."

She moved to Silverstone

"But I'd love to do another championship season in Historic FF2000. It would be fantastic to be pushing higher up next year. I've not long finished my final year of college. I went to the Motorsport UK Academy and I'm now doing an apprenticeship at iZone Driver Performance at Silverstone. I now live in Silverstone."

Dad Julian was a racer

"I think my earliest memories are being at Oulton Park and Brands Hatch and watching my dad Julian race. So that was what got me into it, seeing my dad's TVRs and thinking 'I want to do that'."

BUMPER LINE-UP OF TIN-TOP RACERS FOR MEMBERS' MEETING

Delayed event set to feature a host of bumper grids in West Sussex

By Paul Lawrence

Photos: Paul Lawrence

Gerry Marshall race will be a highlight

A mighty field of nearly 60 Group 1 Touring Cars of the 1970s will headline this weekend's 78th Members' Meeting at Goodwood as the rescheduled event runs six months later than planned.

The Gerry Marshall Trophy is a traditional highlight of the Members' Meeting as Chevrolet Camaros, Ford Capris and Rover SD1s do battle. The entry is split into two 20-minute heats on Saturday to sort out the 30-car grid for Sunday's final and 15 three-litre Capris will pack out the entry.

Star drivers abound in the Pierpoint Cup for pre '66 V8 saloons where nine Le Mans winners will line up against a gaggle of British Touring Car Championship racers for the two-driver contest.

The SF Edge Trophy for Edwardian cars will feature two of the most spectacular cars of all: the mighty Fiat S76 'Beast of Turin' of Duncan Pittaway and the Darracq 200hp of Mark Walker.

Saturday features qualifying sessions from 0945hrs and then four races, including the two heats for the Gerry Marshall Trophy, from 1515hrs. The Pierpoint Cup will run for 45 minutes from 1715hrs to finish at sunset. The venue is then turned over to rallying for two special stages in the dark from 1830hrs to 2000hrs.

Sunday opens with two more rally stages from 0800hrs before qualifying continues from 0930hrs. The first of 10 more races starts at 1050hrs with the Arundell Cup for Formula Juniors and finishes at sunset with the chequered flag for the final of the Gerry Marshall Trophy.

Cam Jackson, ahead here, is one of three men going for glory

Historic FF trio set to scrap out the title

Cam Jackson, Horatio Fitz-Simon and Tom McArthur will settle the Historic Formula Ford title across three races at Silverstone this weekend.

Jackson won the title in 2018 and '19 but didn't set out to do a full season this year and has missed the last four races at Oulton Park and Mallory Park. McArthur, meanwhile, missed four early season races but has won four on the bounce in the Hadfield-tended Titan Mk4.

Fitz-Simon, in his first full season of racing, has been a consistent scorer with his Speedsport Merlyn Mk20 with points from all 13 races. He has yet to score a win and is the only one with points to drop this weekend as the best 14 scores will count. If Jackson can score 50 points in three races, which could be two wins or two seconds and a sixth, he will be champion.

Moss's A40 shines in Prescott celebration

The Austin A40 that Pat Moss drove on the Monte Carlo Rally was a star of Rallye Prescott when Alistair Moffatt took it on a couple of demonstration runs up the hill.

The A40, nicknamed 'Zoey' due to its registration plate, was used by Moss, sister of Stirling and later the wife of Eric Carlsson, used the humble A40 on the Monte Carlo Rally in both 1958 and 1959, finishing a remarkable 10th overall in '59 with Ann Wisdom co-driving.

The A40 had been in Ireland before Moffatt's father Bill bought it at auction and it remains original. Moss used it in a range of rallies before graduating into an Austin Healey.

The A40 was the star of the show

NEWCOMER SEALS FORMULA JUNIOR TITLE SPOILS AT SPA

Nic Carlton-Smith, in only his second full season of racing, secured the Formula Junior championship title at Spa recently with two more class wins in his rear-engined Kieft. The Suffolk racer now has a perfect score of 10 class wins from 10 rounds to date and cannot be caught over the final two races at Silverstone this weekend.

Rally hero Jack Tordoff passes away

Motorsport News was sad to learn of the death of Jack Tordoff at the age of 86 after a long illness.

The Yorkshireman was known in the automotive industry as the founder of the substantial JCT600 garage empire, but Tordoff was also a very successful rally competitor, notably in Porsche 911s.

Through the 1960s and 1970s he competed extensively in the UK and mainland Europe. He was one of the first people in Britain to rally a Porsche 911 and gave the 2.7RS its first international rally win on the 1973 Circuit of Ireland.

His grandson Sam followed him into motorsport in the British Touring Car Championship and is now becoming established in historic racing.

IN BRIEF

Pearce's outing

Rally driver Matt Pearce dusted his rarely-used Porsche 911 down for the recent Rallye Prescott. Pearce built the car nine years ago from a Nick Adams race car but has only used it three times as its escalating value has since made it impractical for rallying. He has more recently run a Subaru Impreza on gravel rallies.

Richards tries Elan

Single-seater racer Clive Richards had his first race in a closed-cockpit car for a dozen years when he shared the Lotus Elan of Robin Ellis in the GT and Sports Car Cup race at Castle Combe recently. Caterham winner Richards last raced with a roof in the Ginetta G40 Cup and has recently been a runner in Formula Junior. At Combe, they finished eighth.

Renault turns heads

One of the star cars at Rallye Prescott was the 1987 Alpine Renault GTA Turbo of Tim Jeffrey, a car he uses regularly in speed events. Thought to be the only such car currently active in the UK, the V6 car runs to the same specification as the cars used in the grand prix-supporting one-make race series of the late 1980s.

HRCR celebrates

The Historic Rally Car Register will mark the 40th anniversary of the Golden 50 Rally next April with a non-competitive tour starting from Prescott and taking in Shelsley Walsh, Burwarton and Weston Park. The Golden 50 in 1982 marked the 50th anniversary of the first RAC Rally and entries for 2022's Easter Sunday (April 17) event will be limited to 60 cars. Organiser Dave Lucas hopes to include some cars that took part in the Golden 50 Rally in 1982.

Drybrough's return

Historic Formula Ford racer Ross Drybrough is planning to return to the grid for the Silverstone Finals meeting this weekend. Drybrough suffered a nasty hand injury during a roll at Brands Hatch in July but intends to be back out for the Silverstone triple-header in his rare March 709. The third HFF race this weekend replaces the race lost at Brands Hatch after a second red flag.

Mitchells join up

Brothers Ben and Sam Mitchell will share the family Chevron B8 for the first time this weekend at Goodwood. Both of them have shared the car with dad Westie this season but dad is stepping aside this time for his sons to race. Ben has considerable Goodwood experience but it will be younger brother Sam's first race at the Sussex track.

Advertising enquiries: 01732 446757

BTCC REPORT: DONINGTON PARK

IN BRIEF

Goff runs dry

Team Hard Cupra man Jack Goff caused a red flag in the opening free practice session of the day on Saturday when he ran out of fuel at the Old Hairpin. The running was halted for good with one minute to go when the session was stopped once more, this time as Nic Hamilton also went off circuit. Ciceley Motorsport BMW 330i M Sport driver Adam Morgan had set the fastest lap with a 1m09.840s lap ahead of the BTC Racing Honda Civic Type R of Senna Proctor.

Steering a line

Josh Cook's BTC Racing team was forced into a steering rack change between the opening free practice session on Saturday morning and the second session at lunchtime. He finished the running in third place, behind the Power Maxed Racing Vauxhall Astra of Jason Plato on a 1m09.482s and Chris Smiley's Excelr8 Motorsport Hyundai i30 N.

Shedden's top spot

Three-time champion Gordon Shedden secured pole position for the Team Dynamics squad when his Honda Civic Type R topped the 10-minute shootout at Donington Park on Saturday afternoon. He set a 1m08.994s lap, which is a new qualifying record, to edge out the Power Maxed Racing duo of Dan Lloyd and Jason Plato. Colin Turkington took his WSR BMW 330i M Sport to sixth spot and remains at the head of the Goodyear Wingfoot Award which is handed to the most consistent drivers across all the qualifying sessions of the season.

BMW nears trophy

BMW inched closer to the manufcturers'-constructors' spoils for the season as it took top honours in the final of the three races at Donington Park, due in no small part to Colin Turkington's race three win. The WSR-run assault will have to wait until the finale at Brands Hatch to be crowned in the three-strong division. Meanwhile, Infiniti team Laser Tools Racing tops the chase for the teams' honours.

Sutton aims for double

Despite not topping the class in any of the three races at Donington Park, Ash Sutton has also made progress to the Independents Trophy after the weekend. He heads Hyundai man Tom Ingram by 33 points in the hunt for the crown.

Ciceley's hard graft

Adam Morgan's Ciceley Motorsport team did a superb job to repair his BMW 330i M Sport after his sizeable race one crash at Donington Park. The Lancashire racer missed race two as the team straightened out the rear of the saloon, but he returned to action for the final race of the weekend and placed 25th.

Morgan had big damage

Shedden was a two-time winner

Turkington bounced back with a victory

SHEDDEN DOUBLES UP AS SUTTON ZEROES IN

Honda was the form car in the BTCC, but the champion edges closer. By Matt James

Thirty-two points is a pretty handsome buffer, and that is the margin that Ash Sutton will carry into British Touring Car Championship finals weekend at Brands Hatch on October 23-24.

Seventh place, a fourth and eighth spot are the headline results, but the Infiniti Laser Tools Racing man came to Donington with the sole aim of making his life in Kent as easy as it could be. There were no risks taken and, crucially, no mistakes made.

Gordon Shedden unlocked the kind of performance everyone has been expecting all season in his Team Dynamics Honda Civic to take races one and two, while Sutton's chief chaser Colin Turkington (WSR BMW 330i M Sport) left it late to spark any kind of comeback with a race-three win.

Race one

From his first pole position of the season, Shedden had only one thing on his mind. Remarkable as it might have seemed, the three-time title winner had not taken a victory since his return to the BTCC at the start of 2021.

Alongside him, he had Dan Lloyd in the Power Maxed Racing Vauxhall Astra. Lloyd's team-mate Jason Plato shared row two with two-time Silverstone winner Rory Butcher in the Speedworks Motorsport Toyota Corolla.

Shedden made a peach of a getaway to reach Redgate in the lead, but his advantage over Lloyd did not look comfortable from the outset. Indeed, over the opening two laps the Vauxhall was never more than 0.3s away from his prey.

Lloyd felt racy. "I had slightly better pace than Gordon and I knew that if I was going to make a move, I would have to do it early," said Lloyd.

That part of his plan might have worked had it not been for a three-lap caution period early on. Further back down the battling pack, Adam Morgan (Ciceley Motorsport BMW 330i M Sport) and Ollie Jackson (MB Motorsport Ford Focus) has squabbled with the Ford lunging down the inside into the Old Hairpin on lap three. As Jackson ran wide on the exit, Morgan checked up and went to undercut his errant rival, just as the following Jake Hill (MB Motorsport Ford Focus) had got a run on the pair. As Morgan moved to his right to allow Jackson to regain the track, he made slight contact with Hill.

Morgan was fired hard into the wall on the approach to Schwantz while Hill was delayed – and pitted – after a trip through the gravel.

At the restart, Shedden's Honda switched on after three more laps and he was able to eke out his advantage over Lloyd. He went on to claim his 49th career BTCC win.

"The start was crucial," explained the Scot. "Once I had handled the restart, it was a question of managing the gap back to Dan and I was able to pull away slightly towards the end. This is a super result and one that has been coming – for once, we have had a clean run at it."

Lloyd, for his part, knew that his bolt had been shot after that opening period of the race. "It was a battle of two halves," he admitted. "I struggled to match Gordon's pace after the safety car, but I am happy with a second place."

Behind them, Butcher completed the podium in his Toyota Corolla. The Scot was delighted that a first-lap ambush on Plato had worked. "I had spoken to [team boss] Christian Dick before the race and my plan was always to go around the outside at Redgate. I didn't expect it to take until the Old Hairpin to complete the move though…"

The delay to Plato exiting the Old Hairpin on that initial tour meant that Senna Proctor got a run on the two-time title winner on the drag up to McLeans and he made fourth his own in the BTC Racing Honda Civic Type R.

Championship chaser Turkington fancied a piece of fifth place too and inched up to the bootlid of Plato's car. On lap 12, the BMW used the superior rear-wheel-drive traction of the German machine to slice underneath his rival coming out of Coppice and had the move done by the chicane.

That left Plato to look to his mirrors for the rapidly closing points leader Sutton. The Q50 man had qualified ninth but had Moses-like qualities over the opening laps. He was gifted two slots when seventh-placed Dan Rowbottom (Team Dynamics Honda Civic Type R) tried hard to relieve Turkington of sixth on lap seven. The lunge the he went for at Redgate failed and delayed the Japanese machine so much so that Rowbottom had to concern himself with Josh Cook's BTC Racing Honda behind on the run out of the Old Hairpin.

As they fought a physical battle on lap seven into McLeans, the tightened fight and friction between the two gave Sutton a clear run to leapfrog them both. Seventh place for Sutton at the flag at least meant that he would shrink from 75kg of ballast in race one to just 27kg for race two.

Cook finished in eighth place while Chris Smiley (Excelr8 Motorsport Hyundai i30 N) held off Jackson to round out the top 10. A further two seconds back was Tom Ingram in his Excelr8 Hyundai in 11th place.

That might not have seemed much to shout about, but the High Wycombe driver had a dire time with his 66kg of championship ballast in qualifying and could only line up in 12th spot. He lugged the heavy load around to score as many points as he could and crucially, all the extra lead would disappear from the passenger footwell of his car for the second encounter. If he was going to maintain the points pressure, he needed something special.

Race two

It had seemed that special was delivered in spades in race two for Ingram. From his sixth-row starting point, he expertly navigated his way through the traffic on the opening lap to thrust himself into the hunt for a win. He was sixth as the cars crossed the line at the end of lap one, and then and into the top three by the end of the third lap.

He divebombed Butcher into Redgate on lap five for second spot and then set off after the heavily ballasted leader Shedden. He had a one second buffer to chip away at, and he took his time.

"I was lucky at the opening corner," he admitted. "There was some contact going in and everyone checked up, and I seemed to be able to find a gap to sail through unimpeded. I am not sure how many places I made up, but it felt great.

"The first laps in a race like that are crucial I had no weight, those in front did and I had an advantage. It is about making the most of these chances when they come along.

"I took my time to catch Shedden, because I didn't want to take too much out of my tyres. My engineer was on the radio giving me the gap each lap. I could take my time, so I did. I am over the moon."

For his part Shedden was pleased to have seen the flag with a podium finish despite his 75kg of ballast. He had ceded first place away from the line to Butcher, who got the cutback going into Hollywood as the pack headed out of the opening turn. The Honda man dive-bombed his brother-in-law to regain top spot at the Old Hairpin on lap two and then was a sitting duck when Ingram got into his stride.

"Tom got into the back of me at Coppice and then got a run, but there was nothing I could do about that," said Sheds. "It was an eventful race."

It was eventful afterwards in the stewards' office, too. Ingram's brush on the back of Shedden's Honda on lap 10 was adjudged to have been a 'push to pass' and the top two positions were reversed after the chequered flag had fallen.

Butcher took third, but that was by no means guaranteed and one of the rarest things in the BTCC happened in his rear-view mirror on lap 13. After slicing ahead of Proctor and then Lloyd to grab fourth, Turkington's march to the front came to a dizzying end as he spun at the Old Hairpin.

The Northern Irishman simply took too much kerb and rotated the German machine. He recovered to 11th (and was lucky to rescue things by being drawn on pole for the reversed-grid race three), but the loss of points to those around him in the championship hunt seemed vital.

"I am frustrated, but I am pushing hard on every lap," said Turkington. "We go into the Old Hairpin at 140kph and it didn't feel much different to me on that lap. I was trying to get the undercut and just nibbled the kerb a bit too much. We have looked at the data and you can see the spike on the damper trace. I could have settled for fourth, but I am fighting for a championship. At least I will have a chance to restore things in race three."

Worse for Turkington was that his error

Photos: Jakob Ebrey, Mike Hills, Steve Hindle

handed fourth place to table-topper Sutton. The Infiniti man's ploy of playing things safe had put him in the danger zone in the lower part of the top 10.

A physical battle between Jackson, Cook and Rowbottom meant the reigning champ almost was derailed. But the Infiniti gradually began picking off the spots and he used his favoured undercut coming out of Coppice to demote first Cook, then Proctor and eventually Lloyd to claim fourth spot.

Behind Lloyd, Proctor and Cook came Aiden Moffat (Laser Tools Racing Infiniti Q50) and Hill, with Rowbottom rounding out the top 10.

With Turkington on pole for race three and ballast-free, it was a race where he simply needed to fight back. Ingram's weekend had gone from good to very bad, as he was saddled once again with the speed-sapping 75kg of ballast in the car, but this time he would be starting from 10th. Sutton would be parked in eighth on the grid with 27kg.

Race three

This one ran to form. Turkington was so far ahead by the time the cars reached Redgate that he could take a wide line into the right-hander to set off on a dominant display, one which showed that some points had been left on the table over the course of the weekend.

An early-race safety car to clear up Jack Butel (Excelr8 Motorsport Hyundai) and Sam Smelt (Speedworks Toyota) from the top of Hollywood after a lap-one tangle seemed like it might have undone Turkington's superb opening lap, but he did it again at the restart. The four-time champion backed the pack up coming through Coppice and then hit the loud pedal at the perfect time to cross the line 0.6 clear as the battle resumed. By the end, he was four seconds ahead.

"The emotion of winning never gets any less," said the winner. "At this stage of the season, it all means so much more. The pressure is on and starting on pole is no guarantee of winning a race or even finishing on the podium. The guys in and around me didn't have that much weight in the car either so I knew the start would be important."

He also pointed out that the way his weekend had played out, he might not have been in a winning position at all had he not spun in race two and been saddled with ballast for the finale. He was taking all the positives he could.

The same was true of second-place finisher Hill. He pulled off a super move on Rowbottom to snatch second place going into McLeans on lap 11, a move that shook up the following positions too. With Rowbottom wrongfooted, he and the following Cook collided when the BTC man made an ambitious lunge up the inside at Coppice. Moffat, who was in their wheeltracks, accepted the gift and motored passed them both and into third spot.

Rowbottom retained fourth while Butcher rounded off a solid weekend with a pass on Cook to nab fifth on lap 13.

Lloyd lugged 39kg around to seventh place, while Sutton kept the championship ball rolling with eighth. He had spent the early part of the race bottled up behind the 75kg-heavy Hyundai of Ingram, who performed a heroic roadblock action for 12 laps until the Infiniti wriggled ahead on lap 12.

By that stage, the others were too far up the road for Sutton to make an impact, but he still collected a handsome haul of points. "I would have taken that at the start of the race," he said.

Stephen Jelley (WSR BMW 330i M Sport) managed to oust Ingram for ninth before the chequered flag too, while race one and two winner Shedden was struggling with 66kg aboard and crossed the line in 13th spot.

Table-topper Ash Sutton kept the points ticking over very nicely

Spin to win: Colin Turkington's BMW goes round in race two

Ingram's second-event joy was short-lived with post-race penalty

SUPPORT RACES

No overall champions were crowned in the British Touring Car support categories at Donington Park, but the penultimate event still proved to be a significant one in many of the title fights. It changed the complexion of the British Formula 4 battle, where Matias Zagazeta's pre-event advantage was wiped out by Matthew Rees – who left Leicestershire 12 points ahead. The JHR driver scored a double pole in qualifying and led throughout an uneventful opener, before winning the finale by over 12 seconds – pulling clear having run three-abreast with Zagazeta and McKenzy Cresswell on the second lap. Zagazeta limited the damage by battling back to second, having been the loser in the earlier McLeans tussle. Georgi Dimitrov won the reversed-grid race as Rees stormed from the back to seventh.

Another title battle that turned on its head was the Ginetta GT4 Supercup's. Adam Smalley and Tom Hibbert had been evenly-matched this year, but Smalley built a 44-point lead at Donington. Hibbert was on the back foot from the start as he failed to set a quick time in qualifying before yellow flags prevented a late improvement and his best result of the event was therefore seventh. Smalley, meanwhile, picked up two podiums and a fourth, while Josh Rattican, debutant James Kellett and Carlito Miracco shared the wins.

The Ginetta Junior showdown narrowed to a two-horse race between Aston Millar and Liam McNeilly. The duo demonstrated their class with a thrilling lead battle in race three – 10s clear of the field – which Millar won, either having already taken a victory.

A lingering grid penalty from Croft and engine woes in race two hampered Dan Zelos' Mini Challenge bid and Max Bird nibbled into his Excelr8 team-mate's advantage with a win and two other podiums. Jack Davidson was the star driver, taking two impressive victories and a runner-up spot.

A track limits infringement scuppered Lorcan Hanafin's attempts to close the Porsche Carrera Cup GB gap to Dan Cammish. The race-one penalty dropped him from second to fourth and behind his key rival. Harry King and Kiern Jewiss took the wins to just about remain in contention.

Stephen Lickorish

RACE WINNERS

■ **British Formula 4**
Races 1 & 3: Matthew Rees (JHR Developments); **Race 2:** Georgi Dimitrov (Arden)

■ **Ginetta GT4 Supercup**
Race 1: Josh Rattican (Elite Motorsport); **Race 2:** James Kellett (Century Motorsport); **Race 3:** Carlito Miracco (Preptech UK)

■ **Ginetta Junior**
Race 1: Liam McNeilly (Fox Motorsport); **Races 2 & 3:** Aston Millar (R Racing)

■ **Mini Challenge**
Races 1 & 3: Jack Davidson (Lux Motorsport); **Race 2:** Max Bird (Excelr8 Motorsport)

■ **Porsche Carrera Cup GB**
Race 1: Harry King (Team Parker Racing); **Race 2:** Kiern Jewiss (Team Parker Racing)

King took the spoils in the opening Porsche Carrera Cup race

RESULTS

BTCC
Round 25
Laps: 19 Track: warm and dry

	DRIVER	TEAM/CAR	TIME
1	Gordon Shedden (21)	Team Dynamics Honda Civic Type R	24m43.829s
2	Dan Lloyd	Power Maxed Racing Vauxhall Astra	+1.331s
3	Rory Butcher (27)	Speedworks Motorsport Toyota Corolla	+2.524s
4	Senna Proctor (21)	BTC Racing Honda Civic Type R	+2.789s
5	Colin Turkington (48)	WSR BMW 330i M Sport	+3.359s
6	Jason Plato	Power Maxed Racing Vauxhall Astra	+4.300s
7	Ash Sutton (75)	Laser Tools Racing Infiniti Q50	+4.551s
8	Josh Cook (39)	BTC Racing Honda Civic Type R	+7.198s
9	Chris Smiley	Excelr8 Motorsport Hyundai i30 N	+10.631s
10	Ollie Jackson	MB Motorsport Ford Focus	+11.026s

11 Tom Ingram (66) (Excelr8 Motorsport Hyundai i30 N) +13.650s; 12 Sam Osborne (Motorbase Performance Ford Focus) +13.995; 13 Aiden Moffat (33) (Laser Tools Racing Infiniti Q50) +14.269s; 14 Dan Rowbottom (9) (Team Dynamics Honda Civic Type R) +16.685s; 15 Stephen Jelley (WSR BMW 330i M Sport) +17.121s; 16 Tom Oliphant (WSR BMW 330i M Sport) +17.887s; 17 Jake Hill (57) (MB Motorsport Ford Focus) +18.976s; 18 Aron Taylor-Smith (Team Hard Cupra R) +20.070s; 19 Tom Chilton (Ciceley Motorsport BMW 330i M Sport) +20.376s; 20 Jack Goff (Team Hard Cupra R) +21.345s; 21 Sam Smelt (Speedworks Motorsport Toyota Corolla) +21.345s; 22 Rick Parfitt (Excelr8 Motorsport Trade Price Cars Racing Hyundai i30 N) +21.745; 23 Jack Butel (Excelr8 Motorsport Trade Price Cars Racing Hyundai i30 N) +22.113s; 24 Jack Mitchell (Team Hard Cupra R) +24.122s; 25 Jade Edwards (BTC Racing Honda Civic Type R) +24.671s; 26 Andy Neate (Motorbase Performance Ford Focus) +24.671s; 27 Carl Boardley (Laser Tools Racing Infiniti Q50) +29.657s; Nic Hamilton (Team Hard Cupra R) +34.189s; R Adam Morgan (Ciceley Motorsport BMW 330i M Sport) 2 lap/accident. **Pole position:** Shedden 1m08.994s (103.26mph). **Winner's average speed:** 91.13mph. **Fastest lap:** Sutton 1m09.712s (102.20mph). **Lap leaders:** Shedden 1-19. **Brackets** = success ballast.

Round 26: 16 laps Track: dry

	DRIVER	TIME
1	Shedden (75)	18m50.277s
2	Ingram	+0.254s*
3	Butcher (57)	+2.451s
4	Sutton (27)	+3.218s
5	Lloyd (66)	+6.114s
6	Proctor (48)	+7.486s
7	Cook (21)	+7.524s
8	Moffat	+7.791s
9	Hill	+8.212s
10	Rowbottom	+8.299s

11 Turkington (39) +8.561s; 12 Smiley (15) +10.243s; 13 Jelley +10.427s; 14 Jackson (9) +10.622s; 15 Goff +11.246s; 16 Osborne +12.309s; 17 Taylor-Smith +13.501s; 18 Plato (33) +14.163s; 19 Mitchell +15.407s; 20 Chilton +15.667s; 21 Edwards +17.105s; 22 Smelt +17.661s; 23 Boardley +19.350s; 24 Oliphant +19.519s; 25 Butel +21.616s; 26 Neate +22.467s; 27 Parfitt +28.185s; 28 Hamilton +34.254s; NS Morgan car in bits. **Winner's average speed:** 100.80mph. **Fastest lap:** Turkington 1m09.524s (102.47mph). **Lap leaders:** Butcher 1; Shedden 2-9; Ingram 10-16. **Brackets** = success ballast. * = one second added for contact

Round 27: 18 laps Track: dry

	DRIVER	TIME
1	Turkington	22m27.150s
2	Hill (15)	+4.096s
3	Moffat (21)	+4.945s
4	Butcher (57)	+7.401s
5	Cook (27)	+7.752s
6	Rowbottom (9)	+11.136s*
7	Lloyd (39)	+13.260s*
8	Sutton(48)	+13.594s
9	Jelley	+18.258s
10	Ingram (75)	+19.615s

11 Jackson +20.201s; 12 Taylor-Smith +22.557s; 13 Shedden (66) +24.079s; 14 Goff +24.251s; 15 Plato +24.651s; 16 Smiley +25.309s; 17 Boardley +25.679s; 18 Chilton +25.887s; 19 Osborne +26.533s; 20 Oliphant +27.104s; 21 Mitchell +29.928s; 22 Parfitt +29.252s; 23 Neate +33.338s; 24 Hamilton +41.519s*; 25 Morgan +47.549s; 26 Edwards -2 laps; R Proctor (33) 12 laps/damage; R Smelt 0 laps/crash; R Butel 0 laps/crash. **Winner's average speed:** 94.80mph. **Fastest lap:** Turkington 1m09.499s (102.51mph). **Lap leaders:** Turkington 1-18. **Brackets** = success ballast. * = five-second penalty for out-of-position start

Drivers standings

POS	DRIVER	POINTS
1	Ash Sutton	316
2	Colin Turkington	284
3	Tom Ingram	278
4	Jake Hill	271
5	Josh Cook	250
6	Rory Butcher	231
7	Aiden Moffat	222
8	Gordon Shedden	211
9	Senna Proctor	188
10	Daniel Rowbottom	182

11 Stephen Jelley 166; 12 Adam Morgan 159; 13 Dan Lloyd 157; 14 Jason Plato 150; 15 Chris Smiley 133; 16 Tom Oliphant 123; 17 Jack Goff 77; 18 Ollie Jackson 66; 19 Tom Chilton 39; 20 Aron Taylor-Smith 31; 21 Dan Cammish 30; 22 Carl Boardley 28; 23 Sam Osborne 14; 24 Jack Butel 4; 25 Sam Smelt 2; 26 Jade Edwards 1.

Independents Trophy

POS	DRIVER	POINTS
1	Sutton	363
2	Ingram	330
3	Cook	297
4	Moffat	292
5	Shedden	262
6	Rowbottom	252
7	Proctor	238
8	Morgan	228
9	Lloyd	227
10	Plato	223

11 Smiley 208; 12 Goff 163; 13 Taylor-Smith 113; 14 Chilton 104; 15 Boardley 86; 16 Butel 55; 17 Cammish 32; 18 Rick Parfitt 21; 19 Edwards 18; 20 Jack Mitchell 13; 21 Nic Hamilton 10; 22 Nick Halstead 2.

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FEATURE

CRAIG BREEN'S ROLLER COASTER RIDE TO A FULL-TIME WRC DRIVE

Graham Lister reflects on the stages that have led the Irishman to his dream chance

Not for the first time, M-Sport has stepped forward when Craig Breen needed help.

Back in 2010, when the Eyjafjallajokull volcano erupted and flights all over Europe were grounded, the chances of Breen and his then co-driver, the late Gareth Roberts, making it back from Turkey to the UK looked slim.

They'd been competing on the country's World championship counter and were on the entry for the following weekend's Pirelli International Rally, their second British championship assignment in a Ford Fiesta S2000.

Fortunately, the folk at M-Sport were adamant that none of its number – plus several associates – would be stuck in Turkey so arranged two coaches to get everybody home, Breen and Roberts included.

While that was the decent thing to do, M-Sport's decision to hand Breen the long-term deal he's craved for so long is strictly business. Hiring the Irishman to lead its attack on the hybrid-based WRC era means getting the best man for the job to drive its new-generation Ford Puma Rally1.

Malcolm Wilson, a man with an eye for what it takes it win in the sport's top level, has monitored Breen's career pretty much from the day it started in 2008. after he had crossed over from a successful karting career to follow in father Ray's wheel tracks.

In Breen, Wilson and team head Richard Millener have secured a driver with ample car-development experience, WRC podiums on asphalt, gravel and snow who has developed into a genuine frontrunner, despite his lack of meaningful seat time in recent seasons.

For Breen, the offer of permanent employment for at least two years is the opportunity to prove that the pace he has shown on selected cameos can be delivered over the course of a full campaign.

Here, Motorsport News picks out 10 events that made Breen the driver – and man – he is today.

CV

Craig Breen
Date of birth: February 2, 1990
Place of birth: Waterford, Ireland
Nationality: Irish

2021: Claims three WRC podiums from five starts with factory Hyundai team; scores first ERC podium for Team MRF Tyres; wins Italian championship-counting Rallye Sanremo; returns to Targa Florio but misses out on victory by 2.4s; signs for M-Sport Ford World Rally Team to drive all-new Ford Puma Rally1 from 2022
2020: Scores first podium for Hyundai with second on Rally Estonia; wins Rally di Alba and Rally Oudenaarde outright in a Hyundai i20 Coupe WRC; fourth on ERC return with Team MRF Tyres; loses Rally Fafe Montelago podium going off on oil dropped by a car contesting the event's national section
2019: Without a full-time WRC ride, Breen keeps busy by contesting national events in Italy, Ireland and Belgium; gets his big chance with Hyundai on Rally Finland and finishes seventh
2018: Second in Sweden is the highlight of an 11-round WRC campaign with Citroen; he also wins Rally Legend in Italy in a Citroen C4 WRC
2017: Shows plenty of consistency with six top-five finishes in works Citroen; finishes third on the Raven's Rock Rally in a Ford Escort Mk2
2016: Lands first WRC podium in Finland; claims fifth ERC victory on the Circuit Ireland Rally and finishes first on the Belgian championship Rallye du Condroz-Huy.
2015: Runner-up in the ERC with three wins but a two-minute time penalty costs him a fourth victory on Rallye International du Valais in Switzerland; makes several WRC2 appearances and places ninth in the final order
2014: Gives R5-specification Peugeot 208 T16 a debut win on the Acropolis Rally on his way to third in the final order
2013: Five ERC podiums for the Peugeot Rally Academy are enough for third in the European championship
2012: Becomes SWRC champion after co-driver Gareth Roberts is killed in a crash on the Targa Florio in Sicily; makes several IRC appearances
2011: Takes WRC Academy title in a thrilling final-round decider on Rally GB after winning more stages than rival Egon Kaur, who ends the season tied on points with Breen
2010: Makes selected World championship starts alongside programmes in Britain and Ireland.
2009: Wins Ford Fiesta SportingTrophy in WRC at the end of his first full season of rallying thanks to victories in Portugal and Finland

1 Rally GB 2011

In terms of tall orders, Breen's capture of the 2011 WRC Academy title was right up there. After a campaign hampered by retirements, not only did Breen have to top the division in Wales but, with a point on offer for each stage win, he effectively had to take as many test bests as possible and hope Egon Kaur's fastest times were kept to a minimum.

In the event Breen, with co-driver Gareth Roberts alongside, finished level on points with Kaur but took the title courtesy of stages won – plus a second place in Finland and a victory in Germany.

Breen climbed an impossible mountain on '11 Wales Rally GB

Tragedy struck on the Targa Florio in 2012

2 Targa Florio 2012

The trip to Sicily was never on Breen's original schedule, so much so that he switched from his Sainteloc Peugeot 207 S2000 to an identical 207 run by the Italian Munaretto team, while the French squad prepared for the following week's Ypres Rally instead.

But with the event added to the Intercontinental Rally Challenge roster at short notice, competing made perfect sense, particularly after Breen and Roberts' strong showing in Corsica the previous month.

It therefore made the loss of Roberts, aged 24, in a devastating accident on the first stage of leg two even more tragic.

Not only did it leave his poor family and so many others shattered, it also claimed the life of a talented co-driver who was destined to share the big things Breen, then 22, would go on to achieve. As well as dealing with the enormity of the death of his wingman and best friend, Breen also had to find a way to carry on while so emotionally wrecked.

The fact he did so said everything about his resilience, the unwavering support of his family and close friends, plus his determination to see through the job that he and Roberts had started three years previously.

3 Rally GB 2012

Having won SWRC on the Monte Carlo Rally and got second place in Sweden, retirements in Portugal and in Finland – where he crashed out at high speed with new co-driver Paul Nagle alongside – meant a big result on Rally GB was crucial to his title chances.

Still struggling to come to terms with Roberts' death a few months previously, Breen would take an emotionally charged win in Wales where the Roberts family would join him on the starting ramp in Cardiff.

It was the catalyst for a three-event winning streak that would lead to the SWRC title in Spain two months later.

Rally GB '12 sparked a win streak

4 Rally Liepaja 2015

Rather than battling a list of top-line rivals to win in Latvia, Breen had to overcome the most difficult of wintry conditions, with thawing ice and slippery wet snow on day one and heavy blizzards of snow and freezing fog on day two.

The fact he did so without any error or issue and with a winning margin of 1m40s was a demonstration of his progression and his ability to handle the elements no matter how tough they were.

He celebrated by suggesting to the assembled media in the press conference afterwards that they look in the history books and to the 1960s in particular "for the last time an Irishman won on snow".

With Briton Scott Martin co-driving, Breen would notch up consecutive wins on the Circuit of Ireland and the Azores Rallye, only for a mid-season spate of retirements to swing the title pendulum in Pole Kajetan Kajetanowicz's favour.

Breen overcame tough conditions on Rally Liepaja

Photos: mcklein-imagedatabase.com, Discovery Sports Events

5 Circuit of Ireland 2016

Had Elfyn Evans not stopped with an overheating engine after winning the opening two stages, Craig Breen might have faced more of a battle to make it two Circuit of Ireland wins in succession.

As it was, Kajetan Kajetanowicz made life hard enough, while damage from hitting a rock three stages from home made for a nervy finish for Breen after the Ford Fiesta pilot cut Citroen-driving Breen's lead to 5.2s following the Hamilton's Folly test.

But with the pressure on, Breen didn't falter during the last two stages and came through to take the victory, albeit by just 10.6s.

Breen withstood pressure for back-to-back victories

Breen's Finnish pace first became apparent with Citroen in 2016

6 Rally Finland 2016

While Kris Meeke and Paul Nagle powered to victory on the World championship's fastest rally, Breen scored his maiden podium at global level in a semi-factory Citroen DS3 WRC run under the Abu Dhabi Total WRT banner.

Co-driven by Scott Martin, Breen moved into third early on leg two and kept Thierry Neuville at bay by 4.6s to complete the podium behind Meeke and Jari-Matti Latvala. It was an impressive effort by Breen on what was only his fifth start in a World Rally Car and early evidence of his penchant for driving really fast on Finland's high-speed gravel roads.

Breen underlined the potential again in 2018

7 Rally Sweden 2018

After scoring his first World championship podium in Finland in July 2016, Breen had to wait until February 2018 to feature in the final top three at WRC level again.

It was only the second time that Breen had achieved such a feat, but it was worth the wait as it was in a career-best runner-up spot thanks in part to three stage wins.

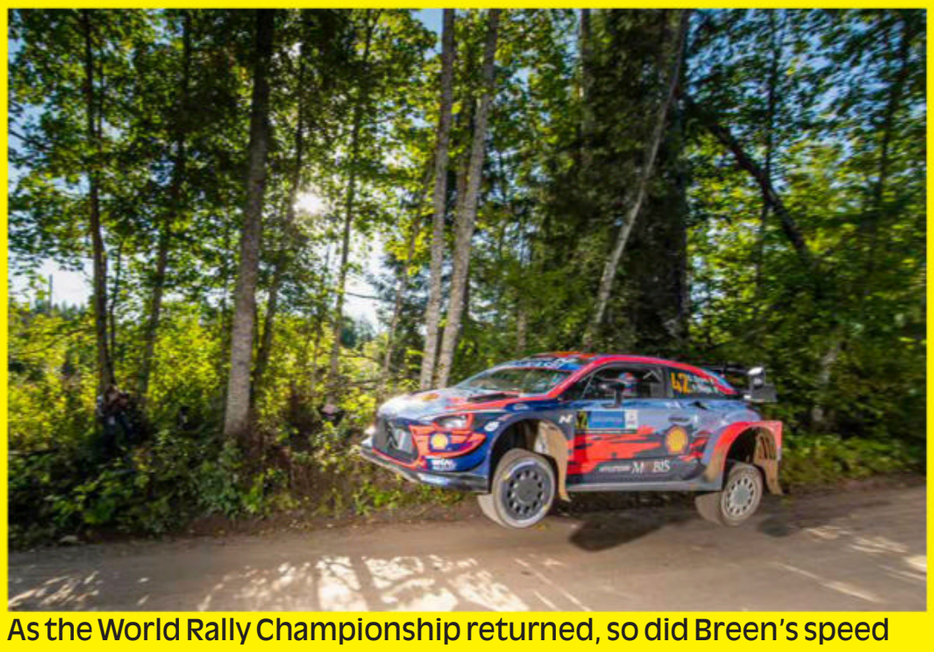
Granted, road position helped his cause (as did delays for several big-name drivers), but Breen was excellent in the lead C3 alongside co-driver Scott Martin after overcoming a trip into a snowbank late on day one.

8 Rally Estonia 2020

Breen was on top form when the World Rally Championship restarted on Rally Estonia in September 2020, ending months of inactivity due to the Covid-19 pandemic.

Although there was no stopping his Hyundai-driving team-mate Ott Tanak from winning his home round of the WRC, Breen played the supporting role to perfection by holding off Sebastien Ogier for second place to ensure a Hyundai 1-2 despite his limited gravel running in the i20 Coupe WRC on fast-paced gravel in the build-up to the event.

It was Breen's first WRC podium since Sweden in 2018 and his first with Paul Nagle co-driving.



As the World Rally Championship returned, so did Breen's speed

Breen let his feelings be known after behind thwarted in Belgium

9 Ypres Rally 2021

Having won the last Ypres Rally in 2019, when it counted as a round of the Belgian and British championships, Breen was always going to be in the podium fight for the event's delayed maiden WRC edition, even though he'd yet to sample a World Rally Car on the Tarmac event.

With Belgian Hyundai team-mate Thierry Neuville standing in the way of a first WRC victory for Breen, frustrations boiled over when Breen was inadvertently slowed by team-mate Ott Tanak after the Estonian restarted following a puncture. Breen, who had led early on, was just 3.5s behind Neuville when he was delayed by Tanak's dust and other debris being dragged onto the road.

"I'd be interested to see what he'd say if I held him up for that long," said a fired-up Breen, who later said he was "just towing the party line now: a reference to Hyundai team orders.

Hat-trick of 2021 podiums came on Rally Finland

10 Rally Finland 2021

With his Ypres Rally top-three ensuring that Breen had WRC podiums on gravel, snow and now asphalt on his CV, Breen headed to Finland in the knowledge that his full-time ride with M-Sport for 2022 and beyond would shortly be announced.

Breen also travelled to Jyvaskyla knowing that Hyundai would be counting on him for a top result, even though it was losing his services by not offering him the season-long campaign he craved.

He took third behind the unstoppable Elfyn Evans – his third 2021 podium from five starts – having initially been embroiled in a close battle with team-mate Ott Tanak.

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FEATURE

DARREN TURNER:

"I'M STILL AMAZED THAT I'VE HAD ALL THESE OPPORTUNITIES"

The three-time Le Mans winner tells all about his stellar and varied three decades in motorsport including single-seaters, sportscars and tin-tops. By Graham Keilloh

Turner has a varied and stellar career

Darren Turner's is a motorsport CV that has to be seen to be believed. For one thing it has astonishing breadth: Turner, over close to three decades in racing, has graced a variety of single-seater, sportscar and tin-top disciplines and done so in a variety of locations. And, for another thing, Turner can point at considerable on-track skills and success too, topped by no fewer than three Le Mans 24 Hour GT class wins.

Likely he's best known for being a stalwart and star turn in GT racing with Aston Martin, a status he's held since 2005 and retains to this day. It's in this role he's taken his trio of Le Mans triumphs.

Yet Turner's resume also has victory in the McLaren Autosport BRDC Young Driver of the Year award, close to a decade as a McLaren Formula 1 tester, plus drives in the British Touring Car Championship, DTM, LMP1, British GT and many more places besides. Plenty for Motorsport News readers to explore.

Making Turner's CV more impressive still, we find out he's done it from unorthodox motorsport beginnings and without ready cash supplies to tap into. Also, given such things are not unimportant, he is the most pleasant of individuals as well.

But let's start with Turner's crowning glories at the Circuit de la Sarthe.

Question: From the many cars you've driven at Le Mans, which is your favourite? And why is it the 2008 Gulf Aston Martin DBR9?
Harry Adams
Via Facebook

Darren Turner: "[Laughs] So yeah the actual favourite I'd say is the #009 [DBR9] from 2007 with the iconic Aston Martin racing green and it was a first big win at Le Mans so it's a special car. And I drove it recently as well on the support race at Le Mans this year; memories came flooding back from that weekend back.

"That said there was some minor changes between '07 and '08 and obviously the little tweaks that Prodrive had done during that period made the car even more competitive and bit nicer to drive so either the #009 from 2007 or 2008 would be my [favourite].

"I've been so lucky, I've driven some amazing cars over a long period of time and the last of the Vantage GTE cars of the previous generation again with the [Le Mans] win in 2017, that was the end of its development, it was right at the cusp of what could be achieved with that car, so it was a nice way to finish the career of that era of Vantage.

"[It was a] different type of car though, with the GT1s' [the DBR9] power and

Photos: Jakob Ebrey, Motorsport Images, Aston Martin

Turner got Le Mans win number three in 2017

old-school sequential gearboxes and reasonable aero and then the GTE was a more sophisticated [car]: less power but probably a bit more mechanical grip and a different type of animal really but equally as enjoyable around a circuit like Le Mans."

MN: Are there things you look for in the handling of cars?

DT: "Pretty much the whole way through that period we were on Michelins and we had a good relationship with them so we were pretty good on the mechanical grip and the aero again was very good on the DBR9. High-speed corners has always been the strong point of the car, and round Le Mans it's generally medium and high-speed corners.

"So from a driver's point of view it did everything you wanted it to do and it was an enjoyable car to be able to push round the circuit because it's like that old saying: 'fits like a glove'. Most drivers if not all used to get in and feel very, very much part of it and at ease with the car and trusted the car from the word go and that's what a lot of drivers look for.

"And I'm pretty sure every driver's had a car in their career where it doesn't want to do anything other than try and throw you off the race track and doing a 24-hour race with anything like that it's always going to be a painful experience. So if you've got a car that's controllable and gives the driver a lot of confidence then you can go a long way with that."

MN sets the scene: For 2011 Aston Martin produced a new LMP1 car, the AMR-One, but it was slow and unreliable. In Le Mans' race Turner's #007 retired having completed only four laps.

Question: Was AMR-One ever likely to be competitive? Were there any moments of 'wow that's good' among the engine issues?

Martin Short
Via Facebook

DT: "Honestly yes, there was, and that was the bit that was so frustrating. It was a big project to do a whole new car-engine concept with the budget that was available and the timeframe that was available, it was always going to put everyone at Aston Martin and Prodrive up against it. And the team, the workload that they went through, I can remember the early part of 2011, I'm pretty sure most of them were working seven days a week, 12-hour days each day for a long period of time so it was a really intense programme and a lot was at stake at that point.

"The reliability was the biggest issue with the engine installation and calibration and everything to do with bringing that engine to life stopped us really developing the chassis. But there were moments when you could see the potential of the car and, as an example, I can remember over that [Le Mans] weekend in 2011, our top speed wasn't very high, but on approach to the Porsche Curves I could see a Peugeot was closing, the car [Nicolas] Minassian was in, and I was trying to work out where I would be through the curves when the car was going to be overtaking me, and I did the corners, came out the other side and was like 'OK well he's not on my tail'. And then he finally overtook me on the start-finish straight.

"I thought maybe we're not so bad, so then I asked the team to have a little look just to see what our performance was in that sector and it was good. You need obviously power but in reality it's about the chassis and the aerodynamics through that point and about momentum.

"So it was a shame, and the programme was canned soon after Le Mans in 2011. So it's one of those unfortunate programmes that had so much potential, we never got to realise it but if you look at the might of the big manufacturers that everyone was up against at the time it was definitely a David and Goliath moment. And they [Aston Martin] took the risk, they went with a brave concept and design and unfortunately on this occasion it didn't work out."

MN: I've heard you say elsewhere that it was during a time of financial crisis and you feel if you had more time and maybe if development had been behind closed doors the potential could have been realised?

DT: "Yeah I think so. If you think about a lot the big manufacturers they're racing one car but they're already developing another car in the background, and when you're a small team, small manufacturer, you don't have that luxury so you have to fight with the budget [you have]. On this occasion it was stretching that too far and also the time in development wasn't there, [you were] getting onto the grid and it's like we haven't got that many laps under our belt full stop, and if you'd had a year's testing programme then I'm sure it would have been a completely different story."

Question: Did you enjoy your brief period in the BTCC? Short, sharp races seem so far away from your successes in sportscars?

Chris Phillips
Via Twitter

DT: "It was an extra bonus for me, I was busy with Prodrive and the Aston Martin programme [and I did] half the season in 2006 [sharing] with James Thompson and it was like well this is great, it's something that fitted alongside the sportscar programme and [is] completely different. So it's like yeah I'm 100%

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The AMR-One had potential, despite lacking pace and reliability

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FEATURE

Turner in Gulf colours took second Le Mans win in 2008

excited about doing it and then 2007 and 2008 I got my chance to do the full season and we were running with the diesels in that period so again learning something new, different technology, front-wheel drive, lots of things to adapt to.

"I enjoyed my time with Seat in BTCC. The racing is different, some of the racing I found a bit clumsy which was more from that, when you go sportscar racing, you tend to always have one eye on the fact that if you damage your car you're unlikely to be competitive and make the end of the race so there's a different mindset, not in terms of commitment and speed but certainly in looking after the car.

"Obviously in a sportscar race there's less wheel-to-wheel action. There's probably a bit more swordsmanship, the type of racing it is, whereas BTCC is like a bar-room brawl. It's fantastic, it's roll your sleeves up and get stuck in and there's a place for both forms of racing and that's what makes it so exciting, so I enjoyed it. I was pleased with how I was able to adapt from one weekend doing 600bhp in a GT1 car, back to a front-wheel-drive diesel and bouncing between the two cars and being competitive.

"I don't feel like I had the best of luck, but you definitely can make some of your own luck. But I learnt a lot from that period and also having Jason Plato as a team-mate, we'd been friends a long time before that and it was interesting and a great education to work with him. I was a bit sad when we got asked to go to Milton Keynes to see the Seat UK headquarters and to be told that the programme was being canned.

"That said, recently I've had the experience of some of the early development testing with the hybrid BTCC car and it was great to get back in a front-wheel-drive car and try some different technology again. And I guess the biggest positive is I met my wife through BTCC. In my world it was a great experience and loads of positives and maybe not always successful on the race track but certainly enjoyed my time in the touring cars."

MN: What was your best memory of the BTCC?

DT: "Knockhill, because I was part of the TOCA package when I was doing Formula Renault in '95 and '96 and I always enjoyed going up to Knockhill and racing up there in Scotland. I had a pole at Knockhill; I enjoyed the race weekend. And there was many [BTCC] highlights in terms of pole position at Rockingham [in 2007], but that's a prime example, I was on pole position and came to the grid and then the car wouldn't restart, so I had all the highs and lows in one lap basically where you're on pole, you're in a good position, you know the car's strong over a race distance and it won't start, so there's lots of missed opportunities because of that.

"But yeah the wins and certainly performance at Knockhill were some of the highlights but there was a number of lowlights as well, but that's the roller coaster of the normal British touring car weekend."

"If there was a chance to race BTCC again I'd look at it"

Darren Turner

Rockingham pole in BTCC proved to be bittersweet for Turner

Question: It would be great to see you back on the BTCC grid again. Is it something still on your radar if the chance came up?

Martyn Tippett
Via Facebook

DT: "I'm happy racing any opportunity. We still watch it [BTCC], if I'm home for the weekend and not away on other racing duties then it's pretty much guaranteed that we'll be watching it during the day, so we're still big fans of the championship and if there was an opportunity [I'd look at it].

"But it's slightly different [now], there's less manufacturers, and they have to be creative with how they get on the grid and at this stage of my career that's less appealing. So it would have to be a pretty spectacular opportunity but if there was an opportunity then I'd certainly look at it again. It's enjoyable, I'm a big fan of the championship so never say never."

Question: How hard it is to keep pace with development in the sim world and how have his customers thrown him curveballs to fix?

Andrew Smith
Via email

DT: "Base Performance Simulators is my little business, it all came off the back of everything I've been doing with the Formula 1 teams since 1998 so I've got a lot of years under my belt with the simulators and even now [I'm] still working for the main manufacturers on a consultancy basis. So in terms of knowing the technology that's coming down the pipeline from the very top of motorsport, it's all about what money you're prepared to invest and they become diminishing returns in terms of you can spend a lot of money on improving the product but actually is it giving you value for money?

"That said, we always try and maintain a high level of equipment and try to move along with the times but it's a business, you've got to have x amount of people coming through the door to keep the doors open and it would be very easy for me to get carried away with 'right I want to upgrade this, I want to upgrade that', but ultimately all the upgrades cost money and so you just have to be wise.

"It's a strong market and things do evolve very quickly and there's lots of different theories about what's the best thing coming along but we stick with a high-quality sim and give great support and a lot of the benefit of a sim is in the car model and the circuit model and we focus on the detail in that area as well, so yeah it never stops. You're never going to have a sim that can't be improved or developed,

He has fond memories of BTCC, especially Knockhill

it's very much like a race car."

Question: How many pro driver friends have asked for discounts from your sim rig company?
Harry Adams
Via Facebook
DT: "[Laughs] With a pro driver it always seems to be the first question, what sort of deal can you do me? And that's the thing, there's lots of companies out there that are building sims and supplying sims and we're one of many but we have really good support and hopefully that's where the value is.

"It's fairly easy to build a sim from components but we're a bit more one-stop shop where we build a high-end product, deliver it, install it, set it all up and then give ongoing support to the level the customer needs. If it's just technical support or you want driver coaching support, remote driver coaching, then anything is possible. Certainly now it's a lot easier with all the ways you can remote coach, it opens a lot of opportunities and ability to help people with using the sims."

Question: You started in Formula First, which were meant to be horrible cars! How did you find them? Did they actually teach you anything?
John Harrow
Via email
DT: "I've got the softest spot for Formula First, I absolutely loved it. It's a shame that there isn't anything similar to that now because it was my only way of getting onto the single-seater ladder back then.

"I bought a second-hand Formula First, we paid £4000 for it, something like that, and then I ran it with my dad with maybe a couple of sets of tyres and the running costs were fairly low and obviously the capital outlay was really low and I loved working on that car. The engine that I got for it came out of a scrapyard in Bicester.

"It was a great little car. It was, I wouldn't say awful to drive but it was entertaining to drive and with the transverse engine and gearbox it was a bit tail happy and it taught you a lot of car control. It wasn't the most aesthetically pleasing car in the world but it was robust; everything that you want if you're racing on a shoestring. It was absolutely perfect.

"I made some great friends that we're still racing together and we're still really good mates out of that era of racing and I absolutely loved working on my little Formula First. At the time, this would have been I think '93, my car used to be stored at Jordan [Turner worked for the Formula 1 team at the time] during the week. If the cars were away at a grand prix I was able to bring my little car into the workshop and prepare it, and I had equipment [there] that I could use to prepare my car and we went from having a novice plate at Cadwell Park to being on pole at the end of the season at Donington, and that was still van and trailer and we were up against the teams and that was what was so good about that championship.

"I don't know if it's ever going to be possible to have something as basic as that nowadays, from when I look back nearly 30 years ago it was a perfect car for that period really."

MN: So why do you think something like that couldn't be replicated today?

"I don't know, you've got all the current junior formulas but they just seem very expensive to even get on the first rung and the Formula First championship it had credibility because a lot of good drivers came from it. And then nowadays there's a lot of championships and it's hard to add value to something that would be a very small-budget formula.

"Actually I guess what is out there now which is on the same sort of cusp is the Ginetta, it's not a single-seater anymore but I guess that's a similar type of racing where they're not that expensive and the grids are full. But if there is something like that on the single-seater ladder it would be very good, like Formula Ford was.

"I can remember going to the Formula Ford Festival in I think it was back in '91 and seeing the RF92 on display and thinking that was just one of the most beautiful race cars that's ever been built; it was like 'wow I'd love to be able to race one of those cars'. But that was the thing, even trying to think about trying to raise a budget for Formula Ford back then it was way out of our league so thankfully there was Formula First because it gave me the opportunity that people could see what I could do and it gave me the opportunity to get a free drive in the winter series which is where it all started really. Fond memories."

Question: What are the frustrations with Balance of Performance rules from a driver's perspective when endurance racing?

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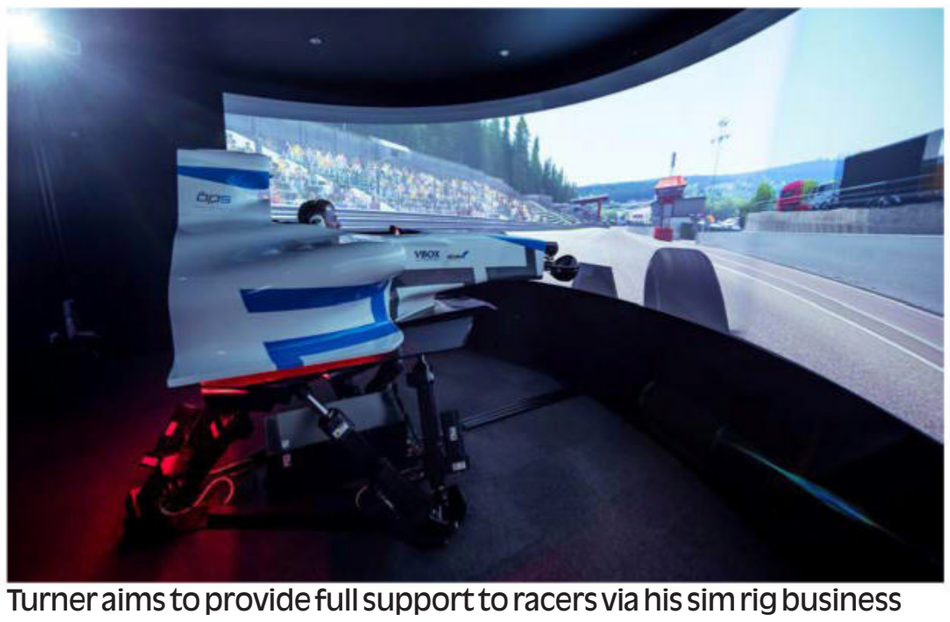
Turner recently has got to sample BTCC's hybrid-powered future



Turner aims to provide full support to racers via his sim rig business

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FEATURE

Turner claimed his first Le Mans win in British racing green DBR9 in '07

Turner's favourite team-mate is "pretty horizontal" David Brabham (c)

Partnering Colin McRae (l) was a special experience for Turner

Kenny Thomson
Via email
DT: "Ah, balance of performance. We need it, we have to have it. If you want to bring all the manufacturers in and create a climate where they all have an opportunity to be successful you have to have balance of performance.

"To try and get rear-engined, mid-engined, front-engined cars to be able to perform in the same way on a race track is very difficult. These are road cars so when the manufacturers are designing them they're not thinking what this is going to be like round a racing track, they're thinking about what their customers on the road want. To try and then adapt all these different types of road cars into something that would mean that there's a reasonable level playing field and you have a mixed grid of manufacturers [you need BoP].

"And I believe it's been working really well over the years. The racing is very close, there's more and more data available to the championships, their understanding of what is needed to keep the playing field level is growing every year.

"As a driver sometimes it works in your favour and other times it doesn't work in your favour but it's swings and roundabouts, and 100% it's only when you're not as competitive as you believe you should be that drivers start crying about BoP. So you've got take a little bit of rough with the smooth.

"It's not an easy thing for championships to get right. As long as there's transparency on how they achieve those figures and there is an element of being able to argue if it's really evident that something has either got too much of an advantage or you've got too much of a disadvantage and people are willing to listen then I think it's fine.

"I've benefited from when we've had the car that's really quick because of BoP and the worst thing you can do in those circumstances is then make a mistake and not get the result that you should have easily got. And then I've had it other times when you're behind and it's like OK, that's what it is, crack on with it and still make the most of our race, no mistakes, minimum pitstops, great strategy, because the numbers will be there in the data to be seen and analysed after the race and then hopefully when you go to the next race it'll be closer or maybe you'll have the advantage. So it's a bit hard to get it right, there's lots of crying and grizzling about it but ultimately is actually a good thing for GT racing."

Question: Who is your favourite co-driver and why?
Alexander Cameron
Via email
DT: "I've been really lucky, I've had some really good team-mates over the years. I will always revert back to David Brabham: the guy that gave me a lot of direction when I really got up to a high level in GT and sportscar racing and even now he's somebody I would trust and go to for advice. He's pretty horizontal in terms of the way he is with life, he doesn't get flustered and the experience that he's got on and off the track has served him very well and he understands the sport inside out.

"But over the years I had a fantastic time with Stefan Mucke, we're still very very good friends and he did some crazy stuff on track that wasn't always to the benefit of us but he was always a very honest and enjoyable driver to work with. You didn't ever worry about him and it was always for the greater good working with him.

"And I had the same experience with Jonny Adam as well, we had many races together, he gets the bigger picture which is not each driver trying to be a hero, it's how we work as a collective to get the best result for the car because ultimately that's going to get you as an individual the best result. Working with these guys has always been really an enjoyable experience.

"And then I had times when I'm with Tomas Enge, he's like fully crazy and so much fun to have around, and Nicki [Thiim] and Marco [Sorensen] as well and the Dane Train, all these guys I've had so much enjoyment from sharing a car with them and enjoying the journey that is Aston Martin Racing."

MN: Also you were co-driver with Colin McRae in 2004 at Le Mans, so what was that like?

DT: "That was with the 550 Ferrari, it was me, Colin and Rickard Rydell; it was a standout moment in my career to share a car with one of the greats. But what a lovely guy, totally humble, full team player, was really happy to be part of Le Mans and to be part of the crew. He had history with Prodrive already so he knew

> **"Colin McRae adapted really quickly to sportscars"**
>
> **Darren Turner**

Turner pilots the McLaren, but a race seat was never on...

everybody already so it wasn't like he had to get to know the team or anything.

"He adapted really quickly to sportscar racing and it was just one of those magical weeks. The whole time as a team, there were six drivers, back then Prodrive wasn't the biggest team, it was quite a small group, everyone was hands on, and we had a really good run. To get a podium for Colin's first time at Le Mans, he had some strong stints through the night and throughout the race.

"But it was also seeing the crowd's reaction to him, I remember doing the driver parade and the fanbase for Colin was huge. Really exciting to be part of that whole experience just because of the energy that it brought to the whole team."

Question: Is it true that when he won the Autosport young driver [in 1996], he spent the £50,000 prize on a Bentley – which he then sold for a profit!
Ellie MacIver
Via email
DT: "Yeah. I was racing for Redgrave Racing and I lived on the farm where the race team was run in Norfolk. Some of the best memories ever was being part of that little racing team; without the Redgrave family it's very unlikely I would have had the opportunities to have made a career out of racing, they did so much for me in my early career.

"And Richard Redgrave, he ran the team but he also dealt in used cars from the farm and I think December 6 I got the cheque for 50 grand. I was going to spend it on racing the next year, we were trying to work out what the racing was going to be, how am I going to find a budget for Formula 3, but there was a good two, three months where the money was in the bank account and an opportunity came along to effectively flip a Bentley, and we used my cash to make the deal happen.

"[So I] got a Bentley, owned a Bentley, flipped a Bentley and it was quite a nice little profit on that which certainly helped going towards the racing budget the following year. The bit that was really frustrating was technically I owned it because it was my money that had bought it but Richard was like there is no way in the world you're going to drive that car, all I could do was start the car up in the garage. So I can remember going in there three or four times before it finally went, just sitting behind the wheel and starting it up and thinking this is great, if only I could take it out on the road.

"But that's been a lot of certainly my earlier career, even now. The bit you do on the race track is one thing, [off the track] it's a business and certainly when you're trying to find money to go racing in the early days there's loads of wheeling and dealing and making opportunities and trying to find sponsorship.

"And it was good, it worked in my favour, I've had some sponsors for over 20 years, I value them because they make a big difference to what I can earn over the course of a season so it is all part of racing and sometimes I think people don't know or don't understand that's how it all works, they think it's only about what you can do on the track. But for longevity in this sport and I think any sport, it's how you operate within the industry side that will give you the opportunities to hopefully carry on for many years."

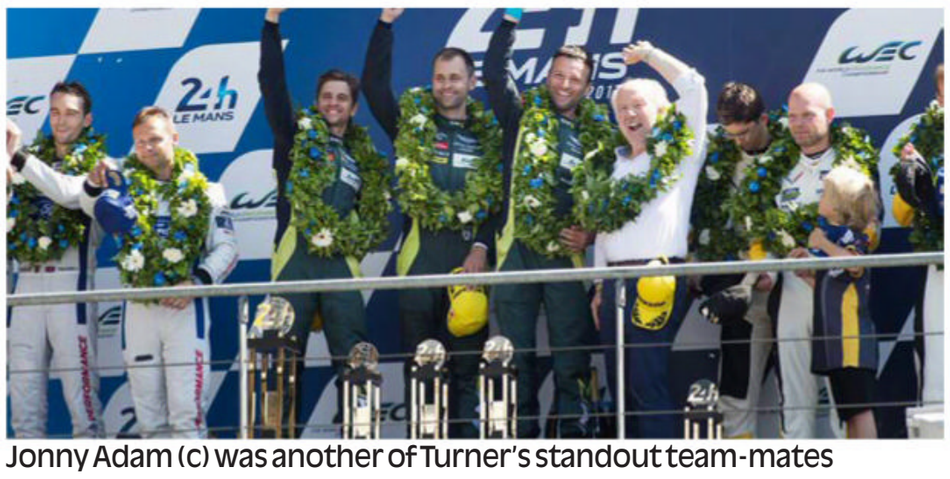
Question: Were you ever close to a McLaren Formula 1 race drive?
Allan Evans
Via email
DT: "Honestly no. I won the [Autosport young driver] award at the back end of '96 and I thought I'd be waiting at least a year before I had my opportunity to test the McLaren F1 car, so I was massively surprised when in March the following year they're like: 'you're going to be testing at Silverstone.' So I jumped from Formula Renault to the Formula 1 car.

"But I had a great day, an amazing 20 laps around Silverstone Grand Prix track in the previous year's grand prix car. I also went there that day and I took friends and family and sponsors and stuff because I thought this is probably the only time I'm ever going to get a chance to drive a grand prix car but I made a good impression and then later in the year I got a test and that was effectively the start of my relationship with McLaren. I was there you could say from the back end of '97 through to mid-2006 and during those years I had a lot of straightline tests and the mundane testing that was done back then before the current regulations where testing is so limited. I had lots of opportunities [and was] super grateful for that chance.

"I can remember the end of first day's test and being asked can you send us the invoice for today's driver fee and I was like: 'I'm sorry, what?' It blew my mind, that! I would have given everything I owned to be in that race car and they were prepared to pay me. That was something I wasn't expecting, and was a big turning point for me.

"McLaren were great to me, and in particular there was a number of people that were great for me, from Indy Lall the test team manager and lots of people. Martin Whitmarsh in particular was always super supportive. He introduced me to Mercedes that got me the reserve job at Le Mans in '99 and ultimately that got me the DTM drive in 2000 and 2001, so his influence and his support were a huge part of me being a professional racing driver.

Turner got 1996's young driver award, and set about making a profit...



Jonny Adam (c) was another of Turner's standout team-mates

"Did I ever think there was a [McLaren] race seat? No, because I was told 'you're a great asset to what we do, you're exactly what we need, plug and play, jump in the car, you do the job, there's no managers making our lives hard, there's nothing in terms of just a positive working environment but there isn't going to be a race seat' and I was completely fine with it.

"I'm still amazed that I've had all these opportunities and driven so many amazing cars and raced loads of cars and tested loads of cars, all of this stuff if you'd asked me when I was 17 and still racing the kart and when I was 18 or 19 when I got my Formula First it was just to be on a race track and I certainly didn't expect to have ended up having a career that lasted this period and being reasonably varied in the races that I've done." ■

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MOTORSPORT NEWS AWARDS

Photos: Motorsport Images, Jakob Ebrey, Mick Walker

MOTORSPORT NEWS AWARDS 2021
in association with CATACLEAN

MAKE YOUR VOICE HEARD FOR THE FIRST MOTORSPORT NEWS AWARDS

As the competition season nears its close, we are on the hunt for the 2021 stars – and we need you

The public can vote for their favourite racer of the year alongside a host of other winners for the first MN awards

One of the greatest aspects of motorsport is being able to dissect and ruminate on any drivers' or teams' performance once the chequered flag or the final control board has been passed and the dust has settled.

There are so many meritorious performances to enjoy, remember and reflect upon but, for the first time, Motorsport News wants to reward the teams, drivers and organisers who have given us the most pleasure over the season just gone.

And, true to Motorsport News's heartland, we will be focusing on the heroes of the national motorsport scene.

We will be handing out 10 awards in the middle of November to recognise the outstanding performers over the last 12 months. Among them, we will unearth the National Rally Driver of the Year and the National Racing Driver of the Year, and this is where we need your help.

Check the sidebars below and look at the shortlists we have drawn up. The rest is up to you.

By following the links below for each one, you can have a direct influence on who we crown as our standout performers of the season.

And don't forget, this is not just about the people who have claimed the silverware. This is about the drivers who have given the performances that have taken your breath away.

These will be the headline categories in our comprehensive round up of the star performers of the year. As well as the National Rally Driver and National Racing Driver honours, there are a host of other accolades that include Historic Driver of the Year, Sporting Scene Driver of the Year, Rising Star of the Year, Organising Club of the Year, Series of the Year, Race Meeting of the Year, Unsung Hero of the Year and Team of the Year.

Motorsport News editor Matt James said: "Our mission with the inaugural Motorsport News awards is to credit those drivers, teams, organisers and volunteers who have gone the extra mile in the last 12 months.

"If there is one thing that the tough times recently have taught us, it is that the passion for motorsport and the act of competing is stronger than it has ever been. As the Voice of British Motorsport, we salute that and what better way to do that than with our first Motorsport News awards. Get involved and make your vote count."

All the winners will be announced in our November 11 Awards Special edition. Make sure you reserve a copy at your newsagents to find out who has emerged on top of the pile. ■

NATIONAL RALLY DRIVER OF THE YEAR SHORTLIST

Rhys Yates
British Rally Championship stalwart

Mark Kelly
MN Circuit Rally champion 2020-2021

George Lepley
BTRDA frontrunner

Matt Edwards
British Rally Championship favourite

Frank Bird
MN Circuit Rally Championship frontrunner

Osian Pryce
Leading light in the British Rally Championship

David Bogie
Scottish Rally Championship battler and Ford Escort Mk2 exponent

William Creighton
Junior rallying battler turning heads with performances

Garry Pearson
Verstatile frontrunner with wins under his 2021 belt

Jock Armstrong
Scottish Rally Championship frontrunner

Yates is on shortlist

TO VOTE: fastcar.co.uk/motorsport-news/national-rally-driver-of-the-year-2021/

NATIONAL RACING DRIVER OF THE YEAR SHORTLIST

Ash Sutton
BTCC champion chasing a third crown

Tom Ingram
Tin-top favourite who races at the front consistently

Dan Zelos
Mini standard setter who has a passion to progress

Dennis Lind
Supreme British GT championship racer who has rocked the UK tracks

Yelmer Buurman
Ex-F1 tester who is a benchmark in UK sportscars

Zak O'Sullivan
Up-and-comer making a mark in GB3

Jake Hill
BTCC driver about to flourish in the top flight

Matthew Rees
Formula 4 rookie who has turned head in maiden season

Callum Voisin
Ginetta Junior star fighting for the crown despite all the odds

Lorcan Hanafin
Porsche race winner mixing it at the front

Sutton has been BTCC star

TO VOTE: fastcar.co.uk/motorsport-news/national-racing-driver-of-the-year-2021/

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FEATURE

GREEN GIANT: SKODA'S MIGHTY FABIA STORY

Since 2008, the Czech hatchback has been making rally history. Nick Garton explores

Skoda may add the 2021 WRC2 and ERC titles with Mikkelsen

Skoda was the butt of motoring jokes while Haughland won a lot of rallies. Nobody's laughing any longer

It is now more than a decade since simple, cost-effective Super 2000 cars took over from 'production' Group N. In that time, almost every major rally series from World to national level has had a Skoda Fabia win honours in Super 2000, R5 or Rally2 trim.

Skoda has gone about its business in the Czech way, with minimal fuss or drama. But at home in Mlada Boleslav, and out on the stages of Czech events, the green machines and anyone involved with them have always been met with the same outpouring of pride that Italians demonstrate towards the scarlet F1 cars from Maranello.

Back in the 1980s, schoolboys liked to joke about Skodas having heated rear screens to keep your hands warm when pushing them, but the rally community knew what was what. Norwegian ace John Haughland was a star in his own right, pedalling the marque's rear-engined cars not only to multiple class wins but also, particularly on gruelling events like the RAC Rally, getting well up the overall order.

After moving the engine and transmission to the other end of the car, Skoda claimed the FIA Manufacturers' Cup for two-litre 'kit cars' in 1994, beating the big guns with its front-wheel-drive 1600cc Favorit. By this time Volkswagen had bought Skoda and the all-Czech Favorit became the VW-enhanced Felicia, with the local drivers like Pavel Sibera and Emil Triner anchoring a deeply traditional factory team.

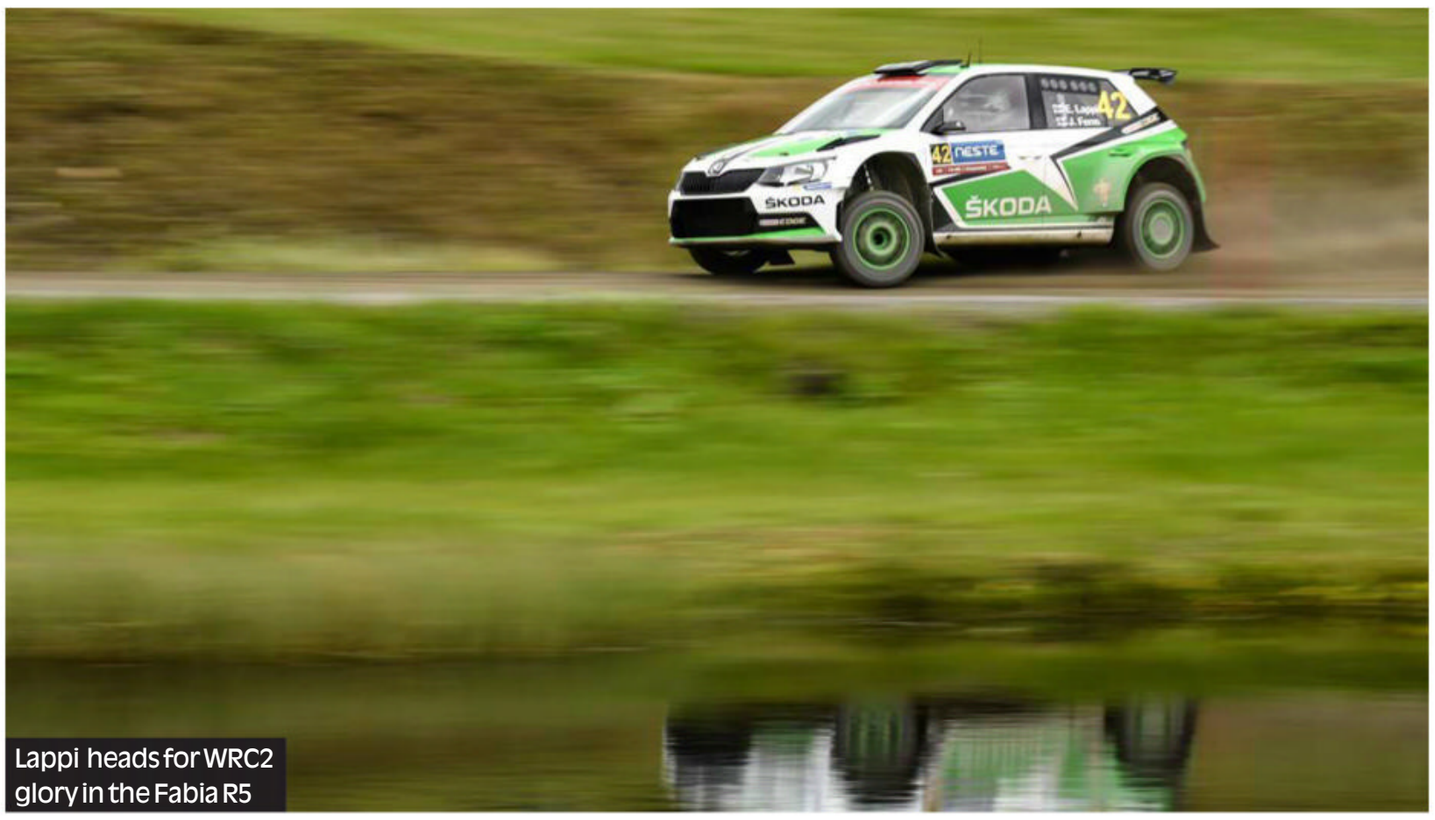
Skoda Motorsport would have cheerfully remained a giant-killer, but its first new car under VW's rule, the Octavia, was too bulky to compete in the 2WD classes. The team was obliged to step up to the WRC, but its development budget was minuscule and precluded the signing of an A-list driver to push the programme along.

When the first-generation Fabia hit showrooms in 2001, it offered a much better platform than the Octavia, but its WRC debut was delayed until 2003, when the big bucks were spent on hiring '94 World champion Didier Auriol, then in the autumn of his career. Only with the guest appearances of Colin McRae in 2005, when he came within an inch of the podium in Australia, did the Fabia WRC ever make a convincing case for itself – but by then Skoda's WRC adventure was fizzling out.

In 2008, the second-generation Fabia became the platform to relaunch Skoda Motorsport in the cost-effective Super 2000 formula, featuring rorty two-litre petrol engines mated to analogue all-wheel-drive. The Czechs bounced back to competitiveness against likes of Abarth, Peugeot, Opel, Proton and VW in the Intercontinental Rally Challenge; a series promoted so effectively by Eurosport that it made the contemporary WRC look rather threadbare.

Jan Kopecky had emerged as the bright young star of Czech rallying, and he has formed the core of the Fabia's factory talent from 2008 to the present day. "Basically, from the first moment, I was the first driver who was sitting

Photos: mcklein-imagedatabase.com



Lappi heads for WRC2 glory in the Fabia R5

Rally2 Evo carries the hopes of Brit ace Ingram

Kopecky loved original S2000 and has been with Fabia throughout

Sister act: the 2012 'VW Fabias'

History will record that Volkswagen turned up in the WRC in 2013 and proceeded to blow everyone into the weeds for the next four seasons before retiring as statistically the greatest-ever team in the series' history. What may escape all but the most attentive of researchers 50 years hence is that the skillset needed by the Volkswagen Motorsport engineers was honed in 2012 with a season running Skoda Fabia S2000s.

The VW team was entered as a WRC outfit, but campaigned the Fabia (although it wasn't eligible for SWRC points). Sebastien Ogier finished as first Super 2000 home on all but two occasions – a crash in Monte Carlo and a blown engine in Spain being his only dramas. Alongside the Frenchman, VW tried out Dutch driver Kevin Abbring and German Sepp Wiegand, but settled upon Andreas Mikkelsen, who twinned his time as a VW driver with his successful IRC title defence for Skoda's Britsh importer:

"The Skoda in WRC with Volkswagen, compared to IRC, was a bit different because obviously we had to use different tyres, so we had to change the set-up of the cars. We had to drive the WRC rallies a bit softer compared to IRC because the tyres in IRC were a bit softer, so we took a bit of damping through the tyres. But in WRC the tyres were so hard we had to run a softer car to generate the grip. It was a bit different; I was very busy jumping from the IRC programme with Skoda UK."

Rehearsing WRC dominance

in the car," he tells MN. "It was a new car, you know, so [it] was not completely perfect from the beginning but the base of the car was really good, which was important for the team and for the technics and engineers that they had a good base. First of all, we didn't have any technical or mechanical issues, which was quite surprising, but later on we started to get some troubles, especially with the steering, which took some time to solve it.

"The S2000 car was a very nice to drive because it was much closer, I would say, to Group A cars. Everything was very special, if you compare it now with R5 it is a little bit like very fast Group N car, for me this is the feeling, but the S2000 was a proper racing car."

When the first title success came in the IRC it was not Kopecky but rather his Finnish team-mate Juho Hanninen who delivered the silverware, claiming a hat-trick of titles, starting with the 2010 IRC title, which was followed up by the 2011 Super 2000 category of the WRC (later to become WRC2), and finally the reborn FIA European Rally Championship. Skoda UK was always a big advocate of the motorsport programme, from the grassroots Skoda Trophy one-make series through to funding works entries in international competition, and in 2011-12 it backed a new signing to the works team: Norwegian youngster Andreas Mikkelsen.

"I did Rally Scotland in 2009 and did really well there and then I met the people from Skoda UK and we did Rally France and Rally Wales in 2010 to have a feeling for the car and see how it works," Mikkelsen recalls. "We won Rally GB in the Super 2000 category, so we decided to go ahead with a full campaign for the 2011 IRC and that's how my Skoda career started.

"I think it was very special because we started in a really bad way in Monte Carlo, crashing just a few hundred metres after the start. We were a little bit lucky that there was this idea to score more points in the last two rounds and I won both of them so I won the championship by half a point. It was really, really special because Skoda UK was under a lot of pressure because they picked a driver from outside the UK and Cathie [Sleigh, Skoda's UK motorsport boss], was under a lot of pressure so the turn-around and managing to win the championship was I think really the best feeling I ever had, even better than winning WRC rallies."

Kopecky, three times runner-up in IRC, won the FIA's Central European title in 2012 and the main European Rally Championship in 2013. He ended the Super 2000 era by claiming the 2014 Asia-Pacific title.

In 2015 the Fabia R5 made it bow using the Mk3 bodyshell. The biggest mechanical change was that the engines were now 1600cc turbocharged units.

With the Fabia R5, Kopecky claimed the Czech national championship in the car's first year, starting a run of five titles on home soil that has so far only been interrupted by Covid in 2020 and by dedicating himself to WRC2 in 2018 – winning a long-overdue World title.

"That whole season was very special because it was not sure that I will do all the rallies to be World champion, basically before the start of the Monte Carlo Rally the boss of Skoda Motorsport, Mr [Michal] Hrabanek, told me: 'OK, if you want to do the next rally you have to win'," Kopecky says.

"It was the same situation in Corsica and so on, so it was quite a specific season but in the end we won the title so all happy! This was the highest peak of my career, to become WRC champion."

Kopecky is far from the only driver to have found success in the WRC's support categories with the Fabia R5. In 2015, Qatar's Nasser Al-Attiyah switched to the new Skoda during his title-winning year. The 2016 title fell to Finnish young gun Esapekka Lappi, who was then followed to the title by Sweden's Pontus Tidemand, for the works team's third title in a row.

Kopecky claimed Skoda's fourth straight WRC2 crown in 2018, then teenage sensation Kalle Rovanpera completed the gold rush in 2019 with Skoda's fifth, and its works team's fourth, successive title. In the Covid-affected 2020 season, Citroen's Mads Ostberg became the first driver to unseat Skoda at the top of WRC2 after a season-long battle with Tidemand.

This year, Ostberg is locked in battle with the Skoda of Mikkelsen, who heads the standings for Toksport, successfully twinning a full campaign in WRC2 with a points-leading season in the European championship so far in 2021.

"[Skoda] always feels like coming back home in a way," Mikkelsen says. "When Volkswagen pulled out in 2016, I drove three events in 2017 in the R5, which was very different to the earlier car, a faster car but easier to drive.

"It's not so much of a step coming back to the Skoda this year [compared to Super 2000/R5]. We have more or less won the ERC and then WRC2 is looking really promising… Toksport is more or less like the Skoda works team, we have engineers from Skoda, and it feels like a manufacturer team to be honest."

Also returning to Skoda and to Toksport this year is Britain's 2019 European champion Chris Ingram, who relishes every opportunity to get in the car. "It was the first 4WD car I drove [in 2019] and it was much easier to drive fast than a 2WD car," he says. "It's like Lego it's so easy to work on, it's brilliantly designed to help you make set-up changes. There hasn't been a huge change from the R5 to the Evo, it's just a little bit more responsive, there's less understeer on Tarmac, it's certainly been the right car to have progressed with."

Unlike any previous generation of Skoda rally cars, top-spec Fabia R5s and Rally2s are now regularly seen contesting British, Irish and Scottish championships, as drivers shop around for the best package to suit their budget and driving style. From the butt of playground jokes to creating a spiritual successor to the Ford Escort RS, the Fabia is undoubtedly a shining example of what rally pedigree can do for a manufacturer. ■

Mk 1 Fabia was part of Skoda's under-funded WRC programme

"This was the highest peak of my career: to become a WRC champion."

Jan Kopecky

Advertising enquiries: 01732 446757

TOP 10 BATTLE

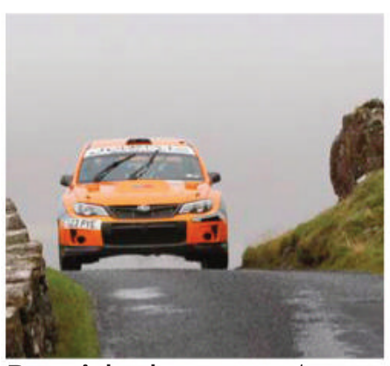
Lessons learned
Mull is not the kind of event you want to learn a four-wheel-drive car on, but Fergus Barlow did just that and came away with an impeccable fourth place overall. Having not rallied since 2017, Barlow hired a Subaru Impreza from Dylan Davies Motorsport and was a top-10 threat throughout, eventually climbing his way up to fourth place as he survived the treacherous conditions where others didn't. He just fended off a resurgent Edwards by just 6.3s to jubilant scenes at the end of the rally in Tobermory. "First time out in this class, great, can't do any better than that!" Barlow exclaimed.

All right for Wright
David Wright collected sixth position, 58.9s behind Matt Edwards, after performing a similar comeback drive. The Ford Fiesta R5 pilot dropped four minutes on the opening stage and was just 41st after the first leg of the rally but a string of top-five times – including three top three efforts on the final loop – hauled him up into the overall top six.

Alas Macbeth
Scott Macbeth probably would've finished well inside the top five in his Mitsubishi Lancer E9 but he slipped back two spots from fifth to seventh on the final stage of the event. Although he was never going to have a pace advantage over Matt Edwards' and David Wright's R5 machines, the decision to bolt wet covers onto his Mitsubishi for most of the final loop cost Macbeth a shot at holding on to his position.

Just missing out
Lewis Gallagher (Mitsubishi Lancer E9), James MacGillivray (Ford Escort Mk2) and Hugh Hunter (Ford Focus WRC05) were all vying for the top places too but each ran into strife. Gallagher suffered a mechanical problem on SS6, MacGillivray lost a wheel four stages later and Hunter's clutch went on the final loop.

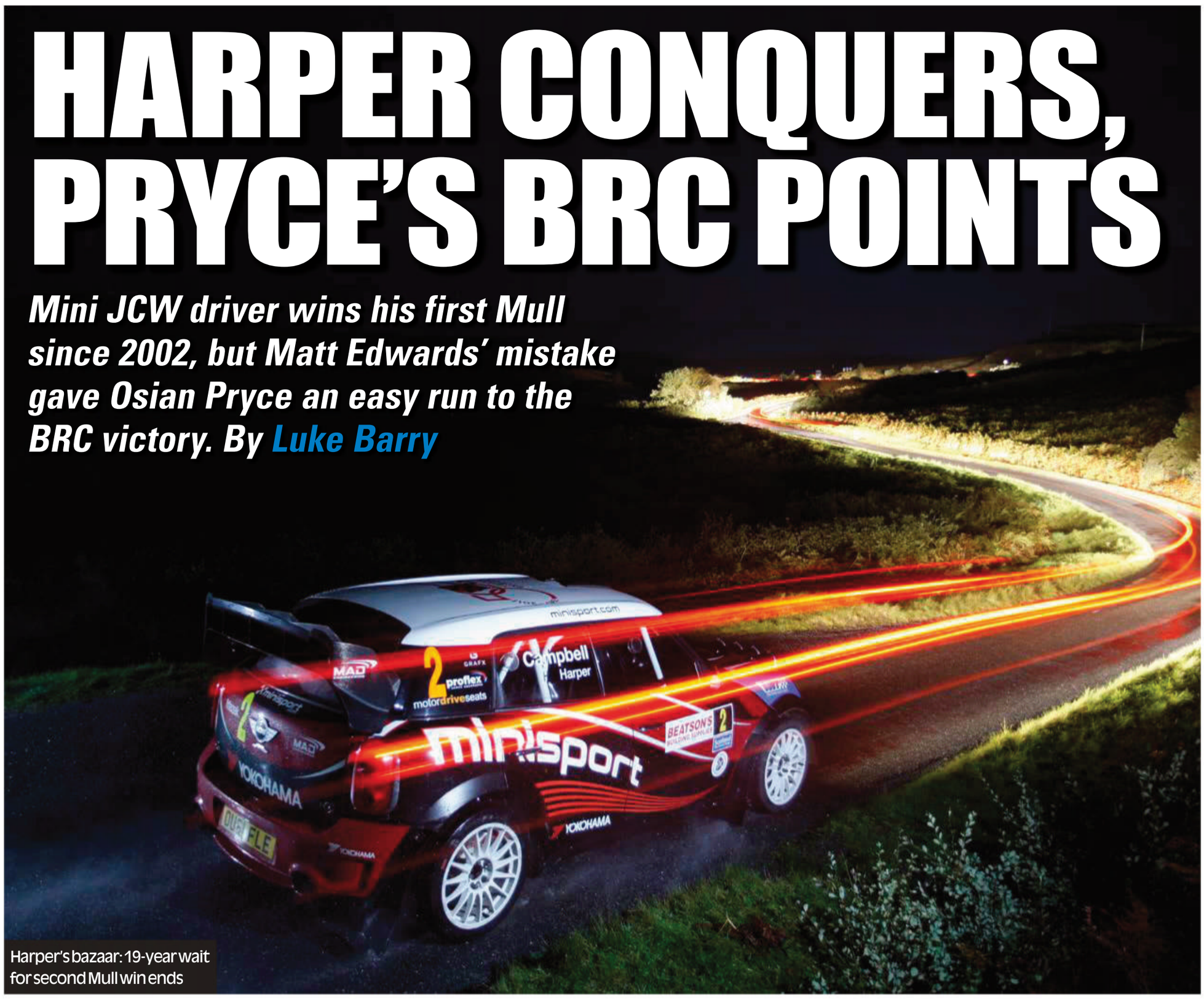
Not easy for Pye
Tristan Pye was another to suffer a tale of woe. Running in sixth spot for the majority of the rally, the Mull regular was up to fourth following the retirements of both John MacCrone and Paul MacKinnon ahead, but that joy was short-lived as his Subaru Impreza punctured on the final night as he hit a kerb with his front-right wheel. He therefore wound up ninth behind the impressive William Creighton who muscled his front-wheel-drive Ford Fiesta Rally4 into eighth place overall. Stephen Thompson rounded out the top 10 in his Ford Escort Mk2.



Pye picked up a puncture

HARPER CONQUERS, PRYCE'S BRC POINTS

Mini JCW driver wins his first Mull since 2002, but Matt Edwards' mistake gave Osian Pryce an easy run to the BRC victory. By Luke Barry



Harper's bazaar: 19-year wait for second Mull win ends

It had been some 19 years since a visiting driver had won the Mull Rally. Many thought the presence of the British Rally Championship for the first time on the island would spawn the victor, but as it transpired the same man that won back in 2002 – Daniel Harper – triumphed in 2021 on a rally seemingly nobody wanted to win.

Double Mull winner John MacCrone was quickest out the box on his first competitive run in a Ford Fiesta Rally2, sharing the stage win with BRC entrant Osian Pryce. Harper's Mini JCW WRC was six seconds back but soon hit the front after a storming time on the 'Hill Road' to establish a 10s lead at first service. But the real story of the loop was the capitulation of a pre-event favourite's assault.

Matt Edwards completed 750 miles of open recce on Mull but got just half a mile through the opening test before putting his Volkswagen Polo GTI R5 off the road. In a moment of "brain fade" the reigning British champion approached a tightening left-hander with way too much venom, pulled the bar to try to evade trouble but hit a bank and dropped more than eight minutes.

Harper and Campbell claim spoils

Bigger picture: Pryce had to choose between overall victory or banking BRC points, choosing the latter

Despite the rear-right spigot on the wheel hub being broken and the brake disc being smashed, Edwards and co-driver Darren Garrod strung together a masterful bodged repair with the spare wheel strap to keep the rear-right corner together. It was an incredibly important decision as of all the BRC rallies to make such a mistake on, Mull was the one to do it with just one top-class BRC1 rival (team-mate Pryce) and well over 100 stage miles still to go to make up ground.

"Just totally the wrong line for the left, too quick and that was it," explained Edwards in bewilderment. "It's a complete brain fade on my part, I just don't understand it really. We were given the wrong minute at the startline and then got the timecard back with five seconds to go with the thing in launch mode, but we can't blame that, we've been doing this long enough."

The 2019 winner Paul MacKinnon was bedding himself into left-hand-drive weaponry, but his real issue was running into a herd of deer towards the start of SS2. Things were more challenging for Pryce, though, who lost his wipers in the piercing rain, and then the brakes on his VW faded for good measure. It dropped him to more than a minute behind Harper at first service, but that for Pryce was irrelevant.

"When we saw Matt parked up not even a couple of kilometres into the stage, it changed everything for us," he said, aware that he now had a huge shot at BRC victory when he'd also played his points-boosting joker. "We've got to keep our nose clean and get to the end now. I just need to finish."

The next three stages of the first leg were a modicum less dramatic, but the baton was passed from Harper to

Photos: Jakob Ebrey, Lindsay Photosport

David Bogie's 100% success record on his 'year off' from rallying came to an end, but the Escort flew

Edwards suffered "brain fade" on the opening test but recovered well

William Creighton fired his Ford Fiesta Rally4 to the Junior win and eighth place overall

CREIGHTON AND PEARSON STAR

William Creighton and Garry Pearson strengthened their respective Junior BRC and BRC National Title bids with impressive performances on the isle of Mull.

Creighton had a difficult start to his event with a broken driveshaft and then clutch across the first pair of stages but some strong pace meant he climbed from sixth to first by the end of the first day.

Finlay Retson proved to be the only driver truly capable of keeping tabs with Creighton thereafter as the Junior WRC driver proved to be the class of the field. Not only did Creighton end up the victor in Junior BRC by over two minutes, he slotted his Fiesta Rally4 into eighth overall to with a seeding of 55. It was Creighton's third win of the season to put him firmly in the hunt for the title.

Mull was Retson's best performance of the season though in second; a welcome boost for his own title hopes. Series leader Eamonn Kelly wasn't quite able to match the pace at the front but he kept his nose out of trouble to seal his fourth podium from five starts.

Kyle White brought in Grace O'Brien to co-drive this event but that didn't change his run of fortune; a puncture on SS5 cost him eight minutes and any chance of a strong result. He had been leading Retson by 11.1s before his misfortune but ended the rally close to eight minutes down on the winner.

In the National category, Garry Pearson was hot favourite with his two major rivals – Stephen Petch and Elliot Payne – not boarding the ferry to Mull. But it was the Toyota Starlet of Jason Black, competing on his more familiar asphalt, that led the way early on, carving open a 44s advantage before two punctures dumped him back on the final Friday evening stage.

John Morrison therefore led overnight in his Ford Fiesta R5 with Pearson down in fourth, two minutes down having lost brakes on his Mitsubishi and getting stuck in a ditch. But from there, Pearson was on a mission and began taking chunks out of the leader that soon became Alistair Inglis. Pearson made his move on the penultimate test to take victory and the championship lead as Inglis retired on the final test. Black clawed his way back up to second, proving what might have been, while Morrison placed third.

MacCrone. There was a bit of confusion over the times, but once they were updated it was clear MacCrone had had the bit between his teeth, winning all three stages including the monster 19.92-mile Glen Aros/Calgary Bay by over 15s to lead by half a minute. MacKinnon had brake problems but managed to limit the damage, heading Harper's Mini, that had slipped to third, by 15.9s.

The second leg should have been the kindest – running during the daytime hours – but it proved to be a punishing stint of the rally. Harper knew he had to push to catch the Rally2 Fiestas, but a spin over the Mishnish Lochs cost him just south of a minute as he dealt with the aftermath of his error, having to let rally leader MacCrone past. "Just after the lochs there's a couple of crests and it just swapped ends, then I stalled it like an amateur," Harper rued.

MacCrone however was undeterred, protecting a 47.6s lead after SS10 and doing all he had to to win a third Mull Rally. But then it all changed. Edwards' Polo passing MacCrone on SS11 was a bad sign, and it spelt the end of his rally. MacCrone's turbo had broken and, although he got to the end of the stage he had ceded the lead to MacKinnon, and, despite his and Stuart Loudon's best efforts, was going no further.

Local hope therefore rested on MacKinnon but he fumbled on SS11, picking up a rear-left puncture after clarting a bank. This would soon pale into insignificance though as he became the second Fiesta Rally2 driver to be let down by a mechanical; his turbo pulley failing and forcing him to give up a lead he'd only just inherited. Suddenly, Harper was back in front with a monstrous 2m46.9s lead ahead of the final four stages at night.

Pryce was relatively content to remain a spectator to the battle up front, as he had everything to lose and nothing to gain by pushing, Harper was unpressured to claim his first rally win in four years. "[It feels] better than the first time, it's been a long, long time coming," he said. "It was probably my lifetime mission to win it with a Mini. I know it's a big Mini, but it's still a Mini."

Pryce was as big a winner, snaring a vital maximum points haul to reignite his title bid with his first BRC victory since 2014. "It's probably been the hardest rally I've done in a long, long time," Pryce said. "[It] makes the championship quite exciting but I think this is where the hard work starts to be honest.

David Bogie repeated his third place finish of 2019 to complete the podium, surviving a scare on SS12 when he broke a wheel and bent his Ford Escort Mk2's steering. Edwards was sublime across the last two legs – breaking the stage record on Calgary Bay with a 38.6s stage win – to climb over 100 places to fifth overall and, crucially, second in the BRC points.

RESULTS

Mull Rally – including British Rally Championship round 5/7
When: October 8-10 Where: Isle of Mull, Scotland

POS	DRIVER/CO-DRIVER	CAR	TIME
1	Daniel Harper/Chris Campbell	Mini JCW WRC	2h16m.40.3s
2	Osian Pryce/Noel O'Sullivan	Volkswagen Polo GTI R5	+4m37.3s
3	David Bogie/John Rowan	Ford Escort Mk2	+7m36.6s
4	Fergus Barlow/Craig Barlow	Subaru Impreza	+11m58.0s
5	Matt Edwards/Darren Garrod	Volkswagen Polo GTI R5	+12m04.3s
6	David Wright/Paula Swinscoe	Ford Fiesta R5	+13m03.2s
7	Scott Macbeth/Neil Shanks	Mitsubishi Lancer E9	+13m29.8s
8	William Creighton/Liam Regan	Ford Fiesta Rally4	+14m08.0s
9	Tristian Pye/Andrew Falconer	Subaru Impreza	+14m25.3s
10	Stephen Thompson/Larry Higton	Ford Escort Mk2	+14m39.4s

Class winners: BRC1: Pryce (Volkswagen Polo GTI R5); **Junior BRC:** Creighton (Ford Fiesta Rally4); **National Rally Title:** Garry Pearson (Mitsubishi Lancer E9); **BRC Academy:** Johnnie Mulholland (Ford Fiesta R2T); **A:** Mark Constantine (Vauxhall Corsa); **B:** Kyle White (Peugeot 208 R2); **C:** William Creighton (Ford Fiesta Rally4); **D:** Eddie O'Donnell Jr (Ford Escort RS); **E:** Fergus Barlow (Subaru Impreza); **H1:** Brian Fraser (Hillman Avenger); **H2:** Tony Shields (Ford Escort RS1600 Mk1); **BRC standings (after 5/7 rounds):** 1 Pryce 96; 2 Edwards 80; 3 Matthew Wilson 53; 4 Rhys Yates 53; 5 Sam Moffett 37; 6 Josh Moffett 24; 7 Keith Cronin 22; 8 Tom Cave 18; 9 Seb Perez 18; 10 Creighton 17

Mull Rally has a unique backdrop

David Wright's Fiesta came home sixth overall on Mull

Advertising enquiries: 01732 446757

RACING REPORTS

Photos: Steve Jones

OULTON PARK: 750MC BY STEVE WHITFIELD — OCTOBER 9

Race one win gave Cooke the MR2 title

Second: enough for Harridge to take Formula Vee crown

RACE WINNERS

Sports 1000
Race 1: Michael Roots (Mittell MC-53); **Race 2:** Ryan Yarrow (Spire GT3S)

Toyota MR2
Race 1: Aaron Cooke (MR2 Roadster); **Race 2:** Shaun Traynor (MR2 Roadster)

Alfa Romeo Championship
Race 1: Scott Richard Austin (Alfa Romeo 155); **Race 2:** Roger Evans (Alfa Romeo Giulietta)

Formula Vee
Daniel Hands (AHS Dominator MK2)

Club Enduro
Robert Baker/Carl Swift (Seat Leon Eurocup)

COOKE MAKES IT BACK-TO-BACK MR2 CROWNS

Michael Roots steered through oil for Sports 1000 win

Aaron Cooke pipped Shaun Traynor to both victory and the title at the final round of the Toyota MR2 Championship at Oulton Park, but the latter did score a memorable comeback win.

Needing only a fourth place to take his second successive crown, Cooke passed four-time champion Traynor into Island Bend in race one after an early battle before taking his eighth win of the season.

He was the first driver to win the championship in a Roadster Mk3 machine. "The Mk3 is awesome to drive," said Cooke. "We got to grips with it pretty quick and we got stronger as the year went on. Me and Shaun had some good races."

Traynor led from Paul Cook in race two, held in light rain, as Cooke opted not to start. An off at Cascades dropped Traynor out of the top 10, giving Cook and Cam Walton the chance to fight for victory. However, their squabble enabled Traynor to catch back up with a lap to go after a storming recovery drive. Traynor passed Walton for second at Hislops, and then dived inside Cook at the final corner to snatch a brilliant victory.

Daniel Hands beat James Harridge to the win at the deciding round of the Formula Vee championship in his Mk2 Dominator, but it was Harridge who took the title for a second year in a row. Craig Pollard led briefly in his GAC machine before dropping to fifth, with Hands dominating the remainder of the encounter in what he described as a "bittersweet" result, finishing runner-up in the championship for a fourth straight year. Two red flags and fading light prevented the second race from being completed.

Scott Austin took his first win of the season in the Alfa Romeo championship, passing Thomas Hill after a mid-race safety car period. The pair battled for the lead again in race two, but were both passed late on in slippery conditions by Roger Evans, who produced a scintillating drive from 12th on the grid to take a maiden victory for his striking Alfa Guilietta, a car he has worked on for over seven years.

Rich Miles led from Michael Roots in the opening Sports 1000 race, as a bad start from pole left recently crowned champion Ryan Yarrow in third. Miles, Yarrow and Victor Neumann all dramatically spun on oil deposited at Druids, enabling Roots to take a comfortable win. Yarrow recovered to finish second after a battle with Miles, who spun again at Knickerbrook and lost out on third to Daniel Larner by 0.1s. Yarrow finished the season with another victory in the second encounter, which was halted with seven minutes remaining after Miles ran wide and spun to a halt on the exit of Druids.

KNOCKHILL: SMRC BY STEPHEN BRUNDSON — OCTOBER 10

WEDDELL PUSHES OUT HIS BUFFER IN THE HUNT FOR SCOTTISH MINI COOPER CHAMPIONSHIP TROPHY

Photos: Jim Moir

Michael Weddell holds a 61-point margin over nearest rival Chad Little heading into the final round of the Scottish Mini Cooper Cup season after a thrilling trio of races at Knockhill last weekend.

Starting alongside polesitter Ian Munro, Weddell swept around the outside at Duffus Dip to take the lead on the opening lap of the first encounter, and then produced a textbook defensive drive under immense pressure from Little and Munro for the remainder of the race.

Weddell and Little again went toe-to-toe in race two before contact between the pair gave Little wheel-rim damage, relegating him to 13th by the end. Neil Hose won the race with Weddell second, but the best was saved for the final race.

Craig Blake took the victory, but it was a race in which any one of the top six could have prevailed. Weddell finished fourth, having vaulted from sixth to third on lap one, while Hose recovered from a first-lap spin at the chicane to finish second. Little had been in the mix for a podium but slipped to sixth by the end.

A double Scottish Classic triumph went to Kinmond

A win and a second have boosted Weddell's chances

"That was probably the most stressed I've ever been in a race, but if there's one race that proved how good Mini Cooper racing can be it was that one, it was chaotic!" Weddell said after the flag.

John Kinmond took a pair of hard-fought Scottish Classic victories to maintain a slender championship lead over the class A Fiesta of Oly Mortimer.

Kinmond and Tommy Gilmartin's Morgan +8 disputed the lead until contact between the pair sent left Gilmartin beached in the Leslie's gravel trap. Kinmond was an easy victor with Mike Connon's Lotus 7 completing the podium.

Things were just as close for the second race, the Andy Walker Memorial, with Kinmond beating Gilmartin – this time without contact – to victory, as Connon came home a deserved third.

Kyle Nisbet and Ryan Smith shared the Scottish C1 Cup victories as title rivals C1 Cup title rivals Ross Dunn and Dan Martin came to blows in the opening race, pitching Martin into a roll. Martin retains the points lead, albeit by a solitary point over last year's champion Dunn.

There were a pair of titles decided over the course of the day, as Steven Gray picked up the Fiesta ST Cup crown with a round to spare, while Jordan Gronkowski marked his final Scottish FF1600 meeting with his second crown.

RACE WINNERS

Scottish Mini Cooper Cup/R53
Race 1 & 2: Jamie Blake (R53); **Race 3:** Craig Blake

Scottish Classic Sports and Saloons
Races 1 & 2: John Kinmond (Rover 3500)

Scottish C1 Cup
Race 1: Kyle Nisbet; **Race 2:** Ryan Smith

Scottish Formula Ford 1600
Races 1 & 2: Jordan Gronkowski (Van Diemen JL012K)

Scottish Fiesta ST Cup
Races 1 & 2: Steven Gray

RACING REPORTS

Photos: Richard Styles

SNETTERTON: BRSCC BY MARK PAULSON — OCTOBER 9-10

MIDDLEHURST TAKES FF1600 CHANCES

Race one FF1600 win was not enough for Walker (41)

Ten years after winning the Formula Ford National Championship as a 16-year-old, Chris Middlehurst regained the crown at Silverstone last weekend, overturning a points deficit to Alex Walker without winning a race.

Walker (Kevin Mills Racing Spectrum) appeared to have one hand on the trophy after taking his eighth win of the season in the opener while title rivals Middlehurst (Team Dolan Van Diemen) – who led early on before being shuffled back – and Max Esterson (Low Dempsey Racing Ray) managed only fifth and sixth respectively.

But it all went wrong for Walker on Sunday. The 2021 championship regulations prevent scores from the final meeting being dropped, so crashes while battling Dolan duo Niall Murray – the double champion guesting ahead of the Festival later this month – and Morgan Quinn crushed his chances. Instead, a pair of podiums meant Middlehurst prevailed. He was second behind maiden winner Tom Mills in Sunday morning's wet race, the pair benefiting from Walker and Murray skating off before their later clash, then followed Murray and Mills home in the finale.

There were also different winners in all three Modified Fords races. Escort RSR runners Piers Grange and Jack Gadd set the pace in the opener, Grange's turbo version prevailing as Gadd's last-bend challenge bounced him over the kerbs and let Ashley Shelswell's Sierra XR4i nip past for second.

Piers Grange sped to Ford victory

Gadd hit back with a win in the finale, which Grange skipped, while James Harris's Pinto-powered Escort coped best in the wet conditions of race two.

Super Saloons wins were shared by Rod Birley (Ford Escort WRC) and Gavin Dunn's BMW E36 after both Birley and Nick Sutton (Mitsubishi Lancer E10) retired from winning positions. Chris Bassett's pacy Peugeot 306 twice topped the Tin Tops section. Aided by mechanical dramas on brothers Daniel and Lewis Smith's Mercedes CLK clones, Ray Harris took a double win in Intermarque Silhouettes, edging Malcolm Blackman's Vauxhall Tigra in the first.

Eleven breathless Caterham races provided non-stop action. Pete Walters halted Lewis Thompson's winning streak with a 310R double, each time triumphing by mere hundredths of a second. Blair McConachie topped a frantic 270R opener before spinning in the last-lap skirmishes of race two, won by Harry Eyre from twice runner-up Stephen Lyall. Taylor O'Flanagan's brace made him the provisional Roadsport champion a round early, while Geoff Newman and Charlie Lower each secured their Academy group titles by just a single point.

RACE WINNERS

National Formula Ford
Race 1: Alex Walker (Spectrum 011C); **Race 2:** Tom Mills (Spectrum 011C); **Race 3:** Niall Murray (Van Diemen BD21)

Modified Fords
Race 1: Piers Grange (Escort Mk1 RSR); **Race 2:** James Harris (Escort Mk2); **Race 3:** Jack Gadd (Ford Escort Mk1 RSR)

CMMC Super Saloons/Southern Tin Tops
Race 1: Rod Birley (Ford Escort WRC); **Race 2:** Gavin Dunn (BMW E36)

CMMC Intermarque Silhouettes
Races 1 & 2: Ray Harris (Ginetta G40R)

Caterham 310R
Races 1 & 2: Pete Walters

Caterham 270R
Race 1: Blair McConachie; **Race 2:** Harry Eyre

Caterham Roadsport
Races 1 & 2: Taylor O'Flanagan

Caterham Academy – Green
Race 1: Freddie Chiddicks; **Race 2:** Geoff Newman

Caterham Academy – White
Race 1: Harry George; **Race 2:** Charlie Lower

Caterham Academy Autumn Trophy
Freddie Chiddicks

Clubsport Trophy
Jasver Sapra (BMW M3 E46)

MALLORY PARK: 750MC BY RACHEL HARRIS-GARDINER — OCTOBER 10

WEST LEFT FISHING FOR GEARS BUT STILL MANAGES TO SECURE LOCOST TITLE GLORY

Geoff Peek won the final Locost races of the year, but the big drama was the championship itself. Martin West only needed a third place to defeat Andrew Tait, but a broken gearbox in race one put paid to hopes of an easy win, especially as Tait was third, behind Peek and David Martin.

West did get back out for race two, but his car only had two gears and a finish was the best he could expect. Luckily for him, Tait retired at the hairpin from third place, handing him the championship as he limped home.

Peek, not to be forgotten, was on impressive form and defended vigorously from both Martin and Tait in the closing laps of race one. He had an easier ride in race two as second-placed Martin and third-placed Craig Land were too busy battling each other to catch him.

A big field of Historic 750 Formula cars provided an exciting opening to the day. Martin Depper, driving a Centaur, won the first race from Christian Pederson's Austin 7. Both of them had been trading places with Richard Prior's JGS and John Village's Village V2. Village, who was down on power, just managed to keep ahead of Prior, who did well to recover from a tangle with backmarkers. Pedersen was the main beneficiary.

Race two was a more straightforward fight between Pedersen and Prior initially, although Prior spun off at the hairpin while refusing to settle for second and handed his place to Depper. He was 13th in the end.

Both modern 750 Formula races featured tense lead battles. Bill Cowley in his Cowley MkIV was the victor both times, having got away very rapidly from third-place starts. His chief rival in race one was Peter Bove (Darvi), whose second place was enough to secure him a sixth championship. Cowley was quick but the experienced Bove was constantly at his heels, waiting for a slip-up that did not happen. Chris Gough's purple CGR2 Evo was third, just ahead of Mick Harris's Darvi.

Bove let his three rivals contest race two without him. Gough started from pole but was quickly passed by Cowley, although both he and Harris remained close until the end. All three were lucky to avoid a slow backmarker towards the end.

Photo: Steve Jones

West suffered some nervy moments on his way to securing the title honours

Martin Depper fends off John Village and Richard Prior in Historic 750 Formula

RACE WINNERS

Historic 750 Formula Championship
Race 1: Martin Depper (Centaur Mk14); **Race 2:** Christian Pedersen (Austin 7)

Armed Forces Race Challenge
Race 1 & 2: Mark Inman (Caterham Sigmax)

Locost
Race 1 & 2: Geoff Peek (Locost)

MGCC BCV8
Race 1: Neil Fowler (MGB GT V8); **Race 2:** Ian Prior (MGB GT V8)

750 Formula
Race 1 & 2: Bill Cowley (Cowley MkIV)

PEMBREY: BARC BY PETER SCHERER — OCTOBER 9-10

SMITH TAKES A DOUBLE BUT LANDS IN HOT WATER IN BIG RIG WELSH BATTLES

British Truck Racing champion Ryan Smith won two out of five races on the track, though a post-race penalty cost him another victory in South Wales.

He led race one from the opening lap for a comfortable win over Stuart Oliver and John Newell. But Martin Gibson held on in race two until the Esses with a lap to go when Smith squeezed ahead, only for the positions to be reversed after an unfair advantage penalty was added.

After Smith collected his second win in a red-flagged race three, Stuart Oliver was in charge from the second lap of race four. Smith overtook David Jenkins for second on the Speedway Straight after contact. Smith was penalised again, dropping to third and handing second back to Jenkins.

Tom O'Rourke won the final race from Gibson but Smith was penalised again from third, promoting Jenkins and dropping him to eighth.

It was another clean sweep of wins for Junior Saloon Car Championship leader Charlie Hand. He led race one from lights to flag, but Ruben Hage had headed the chase from the start. It came down to a three-abreast move into Honda on the last lap, with Harvey Caton heading home Alfie Jeakins and Hage.

There was a repeat for Hand in race two, with Caton claiming second again from Will Redford. Redford held off Hand for four laps in race three, but after a lap running side by side Hand made it decisive from Hatchets on lap five. Caton completed the podium behind Redford.

George Turiccki was first over the line in all three Pickup races. In race one he led an early four-way break, but only Reece Jones was able to stick with him. A track limits penalty reversed the result, putting Jones ahead, while Matt Simpson was third after surviving contact with a spinning Dale Gent.

Simpson was heading Turiccki and Jones when the safety car appeared in race two. From the green flag, Turiccki grabbed the lead at Hatchets and held off Simpson's challenge, with Dean Tompkins third.

Turiccki ousted Paul Tompkins from the race three lead at one third's distance but Tompkins held onto second, well clear of Michael Smith.

RACE WINNERS

British Truck Racing
Races 1 & 3: Ryan Smith (Mercedes Actros); **Race 2:** Martin Gibson (MAN TGX); **Race 4:** Stuart Oliver (Volvo VNL); **Race 5:** Tom O'Rourke (MAN TGA)

Junior Saloons
Races 1, 2 & 3: Charlie Hand (Citroen Saxo VTi)

Pickup
Race 1: Reece Jones; **Races 2 & 3:** George Turiccki

Legends
Races 1, 3, 5 & 6: John Mickel; **Race 2:** Will Gibson; **Race 4:** Miles Rudman

MG Owners Club
Races 1 & 2: Will Sharpe (ZR)

MAX5
Races 1 & 2: Paul Roddison (MX-5 Mk4)

Welsh Sports and Saloons
Race 1: Keith Butcher (Audi R8); **Race 2:** Damian Longotano (Westfield SE)

Advertising enquiries: 01732 446757

WORLD RALLYCROSS

Photos: Red Bull Content Pool

WORLD RALLYCROSS CHAMPIONSHIP: SPA, BELGIUM BY HAL RIDGE — OCTOBER 9-10

The three-time champion was back on top form at Spa showdown

Kevin Hansen rescued some family pride with a second place finish

Kristoffersson was unmatched in the final

KRISTOFFERSSON HOLDS HIS NERVE IN SPA BATTLES

Three drivers shared the fastest times in qualifying during the sixth round of the World Rallycross Championship at Spa in Belgium, but while fortune had been against him so many times this season, it was triple champion Johan Kristoffersson who was the only one of the three to make it through to the all-important final.

Once there, he dominated to take his second straight win. The Swede delivered a typically calculated performance through the qualifying stages to wind up second overall in the Intermediate Classification. He might well have had top spot but for a below-par start in Q3, and the main accolades from qualifying went to Dutchman Kevin Abbring.

But come the pointy end of proceedings, the Swede and the car were at their best as the track was at its fastest late on Sunday afternoon.

Despite a moment of big drama for Kristoffersson and the EKS JC team when the Audi S1 briefly suffered a fire between the semi-final and the final, the end result delivered not only his 26th career win, but also bagged critical points to pull himself back into the title race. He is now only 12 points behind series leader Timmy Hansen.

It was Abbring who set the fastest time in Q1, but the former works WRC driver was spun out of contention by a first-corner incident in Q2, for which Kevin Hansen received a 12-second penalty for shutting the door from the outside of the grid into Turn 1. Niclas Gronholm also visited the tyre wall on the outside of Turn 1 in Q2, following wheel-to-wheel contact with Hansen.

While Abbring was able to continue, Gronholm's Hyundai i20 could only be driven off the circuit into retirement. The Finn fought back first thing on Sunday morning with the fastest time in Q3 to elevate himself up the order. Despite having been 11th overnight, setting the fastest time in Q4 handed Abbring the Top Qualifier position.

Disaster would hit the Sunday morning pacesetters though in the semi-finals, however. In semi-final one, Abbring made the best start but, as the cars braked hard for the hairpin at the famous Raidillon corner, nose-to-tail contact in the pack wound up with Abbring's Unkorrupted Renault Megane being spun by the nose of Timmy Hansen's Peugeot 208. Abbring's car was then hit again while it was in mid-spin, adding injury to insult by breaking the suspension and putting him out.

Timmy Hansen won the race but was later handed a five-second penalty for causing Abbring's demise, dropping him to third behind brother Kevin, and a returning Anton Marklund.

In the second semi-final, Gronholm led but touched wheels with polesitter Kristoffersson. In the heat of battle, Gronholm momentarily lost the steering wheel from his grip and he hit the wall. The Finn ultimately managed to finish the race with solid pace, but he wasn't able to claw the time loss back and didn't make the final. Kristoffersson, meanwhile, had run free at the head of the order in the semi-final.

Having nailed the start in the final, Kristofferson led the main event throughout on his drive to victory. Kevin Hansen had a relatively lonely race in second, while behind, there was a four-way fight for third.

Gronholm's GRX-SET team-mate Krisztian Szabo reached the final for the sixth successive event and was desperate to feature on the podium. He ran third early on, while behind him Timmy Hansen passed Enzo Ide and Marklund to run fourth. Hansen and Szabo then played cat-and-mouse over their jokers; the former ducking out of the traffic on lap three, Szabo responding on lap four.

Knowing he needed to deliver his lap of the weekend to hold the charging champion behind, Szabo just edged Hansen at the joker merge, and delivered an impeccable display of defensive driving for the remaining tours to hold onto the final podium spot for the first time in his World RX career.

Timmy Hansen mitigated the points surrendered to his main title rivals, Kristoffersson and brother Kevin, with fourth place, while home hero Ide finish fifth at the circuit where he made his rallycross debut in 2019.

Anton Marklund drove the Hyundai i20 that had previously won the first Spa event in 2019 with Russian driver Timur Timerzyanov at the wheel, to sixth. British Rallycross Championship leader Ollie O'Donovan made his second World RX start of the season but missed Q4 due to an engine problem. After some heroic surgery by the Tony Bardy team. O'Donovan returned for the semi-finals, but retired with a puncture.

RESULTS

World Rallycross Championship
Round 6 When: October 9-10 Where: Spa, Belgium

POS	DRIVER	CAR	TIME
1	Johan Kristoffersson	Audi S1)	3m10.857s
2	Kevin Hansen	Peugeot 208	+2.601s
3	Krisztian Szabo	Hyundai i20	+5.338s
4	Timmy Hansen	Peugeot 208	+5.633s
5	Enzo Ide	Audi S1	+6.119s
6	Anton Marklund	Hyundai i20	+6.648s

Euro RX1: Andreas Bakkerud (Skoda Fabia); **RX2e:** Guillaume De Ridder; **Euro RX3:** Yuri Belevskiy (Audi A1)

BAKKERUD SEALS EUROPEAN RX1 TITLE JOY

Andreas Bakkerud knows all about lining up alongside your closest rival for a title in the last race of the year.

After all, it was in Cape Town, South Africa, where Bakkerud lined up alongside Swede Timmy Hansen in a tight fight for the World RX crown in 2019, but on that occasion he would lose out on winning the big prize. Bakkerud is in a different place in 2021, both physically and mentally.

Despite an up-and-down campaign in the headline European Championship RX1 (formally Supercar) category this year, it's World RX exile Bakkerud who has set the pace although results have been hard to come by.

He got held up in the final in Sweden, then a technical issue slowed his challenge in France. He got pushed off in the semi-finals in Latvia but at Spa he was dominant. Fastest in three of the four qualifying races, Bakkerud topped the intermediate order, then won semi-final one to net pole for the final. The points leader entering the event, Fabian Pailler, crashed out in a qualifying race on Saturday, but battled back to win semi-final two and join Bakkerud on the front row of the final.

But, the Norwegian wasn't to be flustered, he won the race to turn one, executed six brilliant laps to retain track position after his joker on the final tour and crossed the finish line ahead of Pailler to claim the crown, his third European title having claimed back-to-back Super1600 crowns in 2011 and 2012. Bakkerud's ES Motorsport team mate Janis Baumanis finished third and secured the same position in the points.

Belgian Guillaume De Ridder claimed a home win in the RX2e series, while RX150 Rallycross points leader Patrick O'Donovan secured his first qualifying race win of the season in Q4 of RX2e, but suffered a crash in the semi-final that meant the 17-year-old was forced to make a trip to hospital having suffered severe whiplash, but was discharged later the same evening.

Yuri Belevskiy put one hand on the Euro RX3 crown with victory ahead of the final round in Portugal this weekend.

Bakkerud proved what the World RX is missing with title glory

WHAT'S ON

YOUTUBE

Cricket innocents have been known to ask how on earth it is possible for a test match, after five days, to end in a draw? Perhaps, in a similar vein, Le Mans innocents might ask how after a whole 24 hours of racing, the result can still come down to the last lap?

Yet we initiated know it's far from unlikely, particularly in its ultra-competitive GT battle. And it is exactly what happened in the most recent of the three Le Mans wins for our esteemed readers' Q&A guest this week, Darren Turner, in 2017.

Thanks to Prodrive's YouTube channel we can join this round-the-clock race with a grand total of nine minutes left, and Turner's Aston Martin driving partner Jonny Adam is on the rear bumper of the GTE Pro leader

Aston thriller at Le Mans

Corvette driven by Jordan Taylor. Victory is at stake and the tension is all-encompassing.

Adam initially seeks to resolve matters with five minutes to go via a Leeroy Jenkins move at Arnage. It didn't work; indeed it looked like it had dashed the Aston's hopes. But more than one twist still remained.

You can watch it all at youtube.com/watch?v=4GoY4AwDfCU or by searching 'Aston Martin Le Mans 2017 final laps'.

Graham Keilloh

TV GUIDE

This weekend we'll find out if Elfyn Evans can make further inroads into his Toyota team-mate Sebastien Ogier's World Rally Championship lead, in its latest counter in Spain, and BT Sport has highlights. Day one's best action is tomorrow (Friday) at 2330hrs-0000hrs on BT Sport 2, day two's best is the same time on Saturday on BT Sport 3, while the final day's is at 2145hrs-2215hrs on Sunday on BT Sport 2. There are also highlights of the whole thing on Monday and Tuesday.

Sky Sports F1 meanwhile continues to spoil us with retro action, this time with past Stateside races to build up to next weekend's United States Grand Prix. It starts on Monday with

Scott Martin and Elfyn Evans will chase glory

1981's shown in full (1900hrs-2115hrs), then on Tuesday there are highlights of 1983's extraordinary Long Beach race (1900hrs-1945hrs) followed by the whole of Lewis Hamilton and Fernando Alonso's Indianapolis 2007 face off (2000hrs-2200hrs).

You can catch this weekend's latest World Rallycross Championship round post hoc on BT Sport 2 on Tuesday at 1300hrs-1400hrs. While ahead of this weekend's British GT season finale Sky Sports F1 tomorrow lets you catch up on the entire season, with a hour's highlights of each round kicking off at 1300hrs with Brands Hatch.

Graham Keilloh

LIVE TV

WORLD RALLY CHAMPIONSHIP RALLY SPAIN
SS9: Saturday, 0930hrs-1030hrs, BT Sport 1
SS12: Saturday, 1500hrs-1600hrs, BT Sport/ESPN
SS15: Sunday, 0700hrs-0800hrs, BT Sport 1
SS17/Powerstage: Sunday, 1100hrs-1230hrs, BT Sport 2

WORLD RALLYCROSS CHAMPIONSHIP PORTUGAL
Semi-finals and final: Sunday, 1700hrs-1800hrs, BT Sport x1

NASCAR TEXAS
Race: Sunday, 1830hrs-2330hrs, Premier Sports 2

LISTINGS

SATURDAY

Oulton Park, Cheshire
BRSCC meeting: FF1600, ST-VR Challenge, Fun Cup Starts racing from 1015hrs (qualifying from 0830hrs) **Admission** adult £14, under 13 free **Web** msv.com **Contact** 0843 453 9000

SATURDAY-SUNDAY

Donington Park, Leics
British GT meeting: British GT, GB3, Ginetta GT5, Porsche Sprint, Ginetta Academy, BMW Compact **Starts** Saturday, racing from 1410hrs (qualifying from 0910hrs) Sunday, racing from 0910hrs **Admission** adult £22, under 13 free **Web** msv.com **Contact** 0843 453 9000

Goodwood, Sussex
78th Members' Meeting: Classic and historic races **Starts** Saturday, racing from 1515hrs (qualifying from 0945hrs) Sunday, racing from 1050hrs (qualifying from 0930hrs) **Admission** from £89 **Web** Goodwood.co.uk **Contact** 01243 755055

Silverstone, Northants
HSCC Finals meeting: Aurora Trophy/Geoff Lees Trophy, Classic Formula 3/Classic FF2000, Historic FF2000, Historic FF1600, Classic FF1600, Historic Touring Cars, Guards Trophy, Historic Road Sports, 70s Road Sports, Formula Junior **Starts** Saturday, racing from 1230hrs (qualifying from 0900hrs) Sunday, racing from 1035hrs (qualifying from 0900hrs) **Admission** £14 **Web** silverstone.co.uk

Snetterton, Norfolk
750MC meeting: Clio 182, BMW Car Club, 116 Trophy, F1000, Ma7da Series, 5Club MX-5 Cup, Roadsports, Bike Sports, Sports Specials, Classic Stock Hatch, Hot Hatch **Starts** Saturday, racing from 1150hrs (qualifying from 0900hrs) Sunday, racing from 0945hrs (qualifying from 0900hrs) **Admission** adult £14, under 13 free **Web** msv.com **Contact** 0843 453 9000

SUNDAY

Mallory Park, Leics
BARC meeting: Blue Oval Saloons/Classic Thunder, Pre 66 Classic Touring Cars, Pre 83 Classic Touring Cars, Pre 93/Pre 03 Classic Touring Cars, Jaguars **Starts** racing from 1135hrs (qualifying from 0930hrs) **Admission** adult £15, under 14 free Web malloryparkcircuit.com **Contact** 01455 502214

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ART EDITOR MIKE STOKOE'S FAVOURITE OF THE WEEK!

A Volvo leaves nothing on the table, by Graham Lomax

Mini in a whirl, from Robert Ingham

Jason Plato's Astra, by Peter Atkins

Dean Chilvers' drama from Croft

Fighting pack, from Rich Cranston

NEXT WEEK — OUT THURSDAY, OCTOBER 21

*Correct at time of going to press

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Formula Ford legend tackles your posers

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